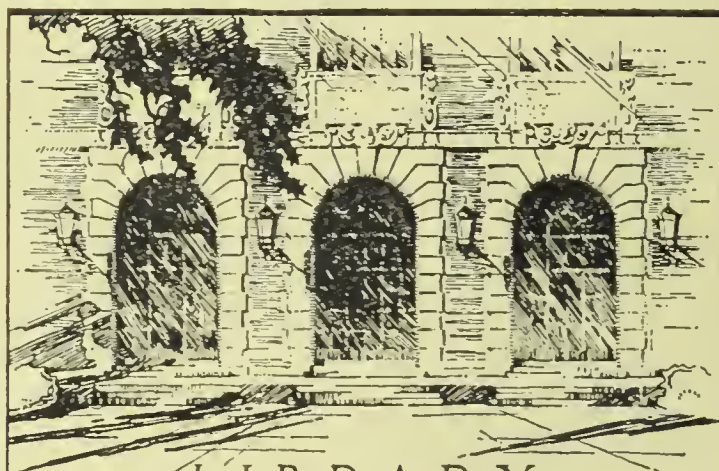


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History of Palmyra
and the
Beginning of "Mormonism"

by
WILLARD BEAN
Palmyra, N. Y.

Published by
PALMYRA COURIER CO., Inc.
PALMYRA, N. Y.
1938




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8 Dec 1888

P R E F A C E

THIS BOOK is made up of a series of articles appearing in the *Palmyra Courier-Journal*, the successor of the *Wayne Sentinel*, which printed the original edition of the *Book of Mormon* consisting of 5,000 copies.

By reason of local requests, and numerous letters received from prominent members of the "Mormon" Church in the West, which often requires considerable time and research work, to give the required information concerning the incidents connected with the beginning of "Mormonism" in these parts, it was deemed advisable to have these brief articles printed in pamphlet form that our readers may know the atmosphere and difficulties surrounding the coming forth of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, commonly called "Mormon Church," which is rapidly gathering strength and momentum and attracting international attention.

Willard Bean, 14 Dec 1888

WILLARD BEAN

PALMYRA

old in settlement, important in history, and celebrated as the birthplace of Mormonism.''—Spofford.

Palmyrans are indebted, to a great extent, to the reminiscences from the pen of James Reeves, who, feeling that a record should be kept of the outstanding events in the pioneer settlement of Palmyra, wrote a series of articles for the Palmyra papers, based upon historical records in his possession. Prof. W. H. McIntosh, who later wrote the History of Wayne County, quotes liberally from Mr. Reeves' writings. The writer of this series of articles has collected his material from many sources.

In 1620 King James I, of England, granted a patent to the Massachusetts Colony covering six million acres of land, then occupied by the Iroquois, or Six Nation Indian Confederacy, which then included the Onondagas, Oneidas, Mohawks, Senecas, Cayugas and the Hurons. Early in the sixteenth century the Hurons of Canada were expelled from the confederacy. A little later the Tuscaroras came from the eastern sea-board (Carolinas) and were admitted into the confederacy. This six nation confederacy made the strongest, and most perfectly organized Indian government north of Mexico.

Massachusetts did not press her claim for this six million acre land grant, until after the close of the War of Independence; and even then, was not over anxious for a settlement until after General John Sullivan's successful expedition in 1779 against the Tories and Seneca Indians of Western New York, then known as the "Genesee Country," or "Finger Lakes Region."

At the beginning of our war with England for our independence, our colonial soldiers were promised by the government, as a reward for their patriotism, 100 acres of land each, for the purpose of establishing homes. At the close of the war New York State set aside a large tract of land consisting of 1,200 square miles, or seven hundred sixty-eight thousand acres, known in history as the "Old Military Tract." This joined the Massachusetts grant on the east.

After the close of the war, this tract was parceled out to the New York soldiers in 600 acre tracts, thus adding 500 acres to the original 100 acres promised by Congress. But the majority of the

soldiers, whose valor on the battle field really secured this reward, actually realized little more than a mere pittance for their land. There was much fraud and speculation on the part of both soldiers and irresponsible buyers which resulted in much litigation and difficulty in tracing titles. I quote from "History of Wayne County"—"Each soldier had a patent made out for 600 acres. The patents were soon bought up by greedy speculators, who rarely gave above eight dollars or half a 'joe' for each patent. These are now (six years later) selling at from three to six dollars per acre. It is true the soldiers sold their patents over many times, some as many as twenty, and this gave great trouble, and occasioned the formation of a board of commissioners, which existed several years as a board of arbitration."

Likewise, when the representatives of the respective claimants for the six million acre tract in Western New York, granted by King James to the Massachusetts Colony, met at Hartford, Conn., to negotiate terms for a settlement, there were both responsible and irresponsible men on hand with various proposals. Among those who were considered men of good repute, were Messrs. Phelps, Gorham, Skinner, Chapin, Judge Sullivan, and others not here mentioned. At the suggestion of a committee appointed by Massachusetts Colony, these prospective buyers organized themselves into a stock company. As Nathaniel Gorham and Oliver Phelps had been two of the prime movers, and had already presented an attractive proposal, the new company was called the "Phelps-Gorham Purchase Company."

AGREEMENT REACHED

The agreement reached between the New York and Massachusetts delegates was as follows: Massachusetts was given the right to sell the pre-emption rights to the entire six million acres, after which the land was to revert to the Colony of New York. Accordingly the Phelps-Gorham Company was delegated to sell the pre-emption rights on the following terms: They were to pay to the Colony of Massachusetts, one million dollars, in three equal annual installments, payable in Massachusetts scrip, which was then depreciated in value. They were also to drive their own bargain with the Indians to secure title to the soil.

Nathaniel Gorham was delegated to confer with the New York authorities relative to surveying a line between the Massa-

chusetts tract and the Military Tract allotted to the New York soldiers. Oliver Phelps was made general agent to treat with the Indians to obtain title to the land. Israel Chapin was sent to explore the country, while William Walker was made local agent of survey and sale. The disappointed would-be buyers had to be handled by compromise, and certain fur traffickers, who had had dealings with the Indians, and claimed to have influence with them, had to be baited with the promise of a township each.

Mr. Phelps lost no time in organizing and equipping an expedition to start for the pre-emption lands. He met the principal lessees at Hudson where they talked over plans. It was decided to hold a treaty with the Indian chiefs at Kanadesaga, an Indian village at the north end of Seneca Lake, where the city of Geneva is now located. Some adventurous scouts were sent to Niagara, Buffalo Creek, and other parts to notify the Indian chiefs to meet at Kanadesaga, while Phelps, with his assistants, secured camp equipment, provisions, beads, tobacco, guns, etc., for presents to the Indians. They loaded this equipment on bateaux which were sent up the Mohawk River to Fort Stanwick, where Phelps and his assistants made their way with much difficulty on horseback, and thence overland to Kanadesaga. On arriving at their destination they learned Brandt and Butler, who had gone to Buffalo Creek to persuade the Indians to meet in council, had become dissatisfied and were using their influence to discourage the chiefs from going. These differences were ironed out largely by a French Indian trader by the name of Dominique DeBartch, who was anxious to see the deal with the Indians consummated. Phelps and his party remained until the great orator, Red Jacket, at the head of a party of Seneca chiefs, arrived. The council met July 4, 1788. Rev. Samuel Kirkland, whom Massachusetts had appointed to superintend the treaty, was present with Elisha Lee, his assistant, as were also a number of interpreters. Chiefs from the Cayuga, Onondaga and Mohawk nations were there as onlookers, but as their lands were not included in the sale, they took no active part in the council. Red Jacket and Cornplanter were spokesmen for the Senecas, Oneidas and Tuscaroras, whose lands were involved in the sale. Most of the chiefs were in favor of the sale, but insisted on making the Genesee River the eastern limit of the concession. Days elapsed before Red Jacket and Cornplanter conceded. It was finally agreed by a majority of the chiefs that

Phelps and Gorham sign an agreement to pay them five thousand dollars down, and five hundred dollars annually forever. Mr. Phelps hired Colonel Hugh Maxwell to survey the vast tract into townships six miles square, after which he returned to Massachusetts to report the progress of their work, and recommend the "Finger Lakes Region" as an ideal country for colonization.

Before taking his departure for home, however, he made a farewell talk to the Indian chiefs, promising to return in two months with machinery for flour mills, saw mills, plows and farm tools, horses, oxen and extra steers for a big barbecue, to which the Indians were invited. On his arrival home he found many ready and anxious to venture into the western wilderness, as the returned soldiers from the General Sullivan expedition had already described it favorably. Phelps and his associates lost no time in equipping an expedition of pioneers to colonize the newly acquired tract on the frontiers. He needed somebody, who could assume the responsibility of getting cows, oxen and steers through. He was fortunate in finding a man named Nathaniel Sanborn, who had but recently married a buxom farmerette girl, named Ann Gould, who had a husky brother, named Sam, all of whom knew how to ride and handle stock and were used to roughing it. They were placed in charge of the stock and the mess wagon, while others were hired to haul machinery, merchandise, groceries, etc., for the commissary. It was a rough trip, full of thrilling experiences—rainy weather, boggy roads, and part of the distance no roadse at all. Their route took them over many hills, streams and swamps, which necessitated felling trees, constructing rafts, building small bridges and miles of new road. They were 26 days getting to Kanadesagà, or Seneca Lake, both man and beast being much fatigued.

ARRIVE AT KANADESAGA

After a few days rest and recuperation, during which time they did some reconnoitering, they finally decided to establish their headquarters at an Indian village situated on another beautiful lake 17 miles west, called Ga-nun-da-gwa, now called Canandaigua. There was a well beaten trail connecting these two lakes made originally by buffalo, moose and elk, and used extensively by the Indians; and as there was no streams to cross, it required little road building on the part of the new settlers.

Here they found a white man named Joseph Smith, who was captured during the battle of Cherry Creek with the Seneca Indians some years before. He had gained the confidence of the Indians, married a squaw, and now became an asset to Mr. Phelps as an interpreter during the councils with the Indian chiefs. A day was set for a two-day council and barbecue, and runners were sent out to notify the chiefs of the various tribes as far west as Genesee River and Tonawanda Creek.

When the day arrived for the celebration, more than two hundred Indians had assembled, including possibly a score of chiefs bedecked in their picturesque regalia. Five steers were designated for slaughter, and the few white women rounded up all the dutch ovens, frying pans and such other utensils as were available, and made bread, baked potatoes, beans, etc. It was the first time the majority of the Indians had tasted bread made from wheat.

The white settlers got busy at once, after their arrival, and began to erect log cabins as temporary homes; also buildings for commissary, office, blacksmith shop, etc. Settlers from the New England colonies began to arrive; also from Wyoming Valley on the Susquehanna River in northern Pennsylvania. On July 3rd and 4th, 1778, this colony was raided by about 700 Pennamite Indians, led by a few Tories, killing a majority of the 1,500 settlers, referred to in history as the "Pennamite Massacre." This surprise attack, together with the fact that the settlers were unable to obtain clear titles to their land, decided the survivors to hold a community meeting to talk over the advisability of seeking a more congenial clime. They had heard of the Phelps-Gorham venture in Western New York, and it was agreed that Captain John Swift and John Jenkins proceed at once to Canandaigua, New York, and interview the agents for the Phelps-Gorham Company. On arriving at their headquarters they learned that all the townships immediately surrounding Canandaigua had been sold, or divided among the men who had assisted the promoters. Next day in company with one of the guides, they did a little reconnoitering. Their course led them northward until they reached a sluggish stream called, by the Indians, Ganargua; but as a result of the recent rains the water was very muddy, and has ever since been known as Mud Creek. The surrounding country looked good to Swift and Jenkins and on their return to Canandaigua

negotiated a deal with the company for a tract of land constituting the present townships of Palmyra and Macedon, in Range 2.

Swift returned to Wyoming Valley to report to the remnant, or survivors of the Pennamite massacre, while Jenkins, who was a surveyor, went to Kanadesaga (Geneva) to hire a crew to assist him in surveying the newly acquired tract. He returned in course of a week with Alpheus Harris, Solomon Earl, Daniel Ranson and a man by the name of Barker. They built a log cabin in the side of a hill just east of the present village of Palmyra. It so happened that a small party of Tuscarora Indians on a fishing and hunting trip, were camped nearby. The Indians looked upon the white settlers as intruders. They called on the surveyors and warned them to leave the neighborhood. Jenkins and his men tried to reason with them, using signs and a few Indian words they had picked up, but to no avail. The Indians left dissatisfied, mumbling incoherently, only to return during the night. It was a dark night. The Indians crept up quietly, poked their guns through the unchinked cabin and fired, killing Barker instantly and seriously wounding Earl. The survivors grabbed axes and guns and fought them away from the door and put them to flight, then quickly gathered up their dead and wounded companions and hastened to Kanadesaga to give the alarm. This experience so discouraged Jenkins and his men, some of whom had but recently survived the Wyoming Valley massacre, that none of them would return to Mud Creek. Jenkins, soon afterwards, sold his interests to his partner, Captain Swift.

Swift hastened to the New England Colonies to find settlers for his township and was very fortunate in interesting many desirable families to make their homes on Mud Creek, New York. Returning to his recently acquired land in the late summer of 1789, he built a log house with a bark roof for a residence, and a similar one for a commissary or storehouse. This pioneer building stood at the junction of Canal and Main Streets when the writer of these articles came to Palmyra twenty-three years ago. It was then being used as a blacksmith shop. The country was largely in its horse and buggy days, but as automobiles and trucks gradually pushed horse drawn vehicles off the streets and highways, the blacksmith shop finally went into the discard and the old building was wrecked to give way for a modern gasoline and service station.

Palmyra was first called Swift's Landing, afterwards

changed to Tolland, and still later (January 4, 1796) to Palmyra. The early history of our beautiful little village circulates around the name of John Swift, who purchased the township from the Phelps-Gorham Purchase Company. He built the first house; his wife was the first white woman to venture into this then untamed wilderness; his son, Asa, was the first white baby born in Palmyra. John Swift was moderator at the first town meeting, the first supervisor, the first pound master, the first captain of militia. He gave land for the first sawmill, the first graveyard, the first school house, the first church edifice. From 1790 to 1812 the name of John Swift was connected with every enterprise, pecuniary, political or religious. When the state militia was organized, he became a commissioned officer. When the War of 1812 broke out, he received the commission of Brigadier General of the New York Volunteers. During the campaign in 1814, while reconnoitering the enemy's position at Fort George, he captured a picket guard, and while in the act of disarming the prisoners, one of them shot him through the breast. He was carried into the nearest house to receive first aid, but died July 12, 1814. Several years after the war, the citizens of Palmyra disinterred his remains, brought them to Palmyra and deposited them in the little village cemetery atop the eminence on Church Street, where they were placed in the center of the cemetery and a suitable monument erected to his memory.

SETTLERS ARRIVE FROM NEW ENGLAND COLONIES

The vanguard of settlers from the New England Colonies began to arrive during the fall of 1789. Webb Harwood and family of Massachusetts, has the distinction of being the first to arrive on the scene, followed soon after by David White, Noah Porter, Jonathan Warner, Bennet Bates and a few single men.

In the spring of 1790, seven families arrived from Wyoming Valley Colony. These colonists fought under John Swift, then captain, during the Pennamite Indian War. During the early summer a number of colonists arrived from Rhode Island, among whom were Humphrey Sherman, Gideon, Edward, Pardon, Job, Stephen and Lemuel Durfee, Nathan Harris, Isaac Goldsmith, Weaver Osband, Isaac Hathaway and Isaac Springer. Humphrey and his brother-in-law, Gideon Durfee, bought fifteen hundred

acres of wild land just east of the village of Palmyra at 18 pence per acre. Nathan Harris, father of Martin Harris, bought six hundred acres just north of Palmyra at two shillings per acre and others bought smaller acreage. These Rhode Islanders all paid cash for their land, which enabled Captain Swift to make final payment for his township, which, in turn, enabled Swift to issue clear titles to the colonists for land purchased from him.

The fact that Palmyra colonists were able to obtain clear titles to land proved an incentive to induce settlers to flock here which gave Palmyra the start of other villages now rapidly springing up in the Finger Lakes region. Palmyra was a thriving village twenty years before Rochester was thought of. It should be remembered that this whole drumlin hill region was an unbroken wilderness largely covered by virgin forest, except here and there limited areas cleared by the original Indian inhabitants, who were still growing an abundance of corn, beans, squash, etc.

One of the first public buildings erected in Palmyra was a rather commodious block-house, to be used as a refuge or place of safety in case of trouble with the Indians. Palmyra was then the western frontier, or "wild and woolly West." It was customary for the villagers to climb to the summit of "Wintergreen Hill," or some other nearby eminence, where they could watch the settlers fell trees and erect the block-house and other buildings. In 1810 three hundred and fifty-five families and a few old bachelors had located in Palmyra, making a population of 2,187, averaging more than six persons to the family. In 1820 the population had increased to 2,719, and in 1827 when the village was incorporated, the population had reached 3,100. The local paper, speaking editorially, at that time said: "The Village of Palmyra is, by its favorable location, destined to become a place of considerable importance, in point of commercial business, as the past few years have fully demonstrated. Possessing the advantage of fertile territory and an industrious population on one side, as well as immense business of the Grand Canal necessarily transacted at this point, it is easily foreseen that, with a little additional enterprise, unanimity of feeling, and reciprocity of action, on the part of its citizens, the period would soon arrive where it will hold a high and respectable rank among the renown 'Villages of the West.' "

But the editor of the "Wayne Sentinel" proved a false prophet. There were other developments then under way that he failed to take into consideration. On July 4, 1817, the Erie Canal project got underway, and during that period between 1825-1830, while Palmyra was the western terminal, Palmyra village reached her zenith so far as population was concerned, being then about 3,100. But as the canal proceeded westward, the colonists began to venture farther into the western wilderness. About fifteen families located on the Genesee River twenty-two miles to the west, where there were plenty of falls for development of water power, which was lacking at Palmyra. This was the beginning of the city of Rochester, now with a population of approximately 340,000. Grist-mills, saw-mills and other industries soon sprang up and Rochester soon became celebrated as the "Flour City of Western New York." The Erie Canal was finished and the water turned in October 26, 1825.

PALMYRA REACHES THE PEAK OF ITS POPULATION

Up to this time, Palmyra was a stop-off place for colonists and a shipping point for farm produce. The canal was a highway for emigration and commerce. Two packets (boats) came and went daily. Extensive grocery and produce stores lined Canal Street. In 1828 there were eighteen places where dry-goods were sold. Three tanneries were in operation, as well as asheries, furriers, malt houses, etc. But alas! The villagers suddenly became western minded and there was a decided slump in all branches of business. So many contracted the "western fever" that property depreciated to one-third its former value. Produce stores diminished in number, the tanneries discontinued business, and all but four of the dry goods stores closed out their business. Other industries were closed and warehouses vacated. For one hundred ten years the population has remained practically stationary. The last census shows a population of something less than 2,700. This does not mean that Palmyra has not gone forward. The lack of increase in population may be accounted for, in part, from the fact that, in pioneer days, the average family consisted of six or seven human beings, whereas the average modern family consists of a man and his wife, a bowl of goldfish, a tabby cat, a sweaty nosed dog of no particular breed and a canary bird or so. But the

surrounding terrain has been largely cleared of virgin forests and the land converted into productive farms, and has quadrupled in population. The township has a population of approximately 4,500, and the village at present has more homes and better homes, but fewer and fewer children. New business blocks and factories have been built and old ones modernized. Palmyra has reason to be proud of her beautiful, well-kept residences, modern school, paved, clean and well-lighted streets, beautiful shade trees, shrubs, flowers and well-kept lawns.

But let us return to pioneer days. It is interesting to read reminiscences of Palmyra's pioneer settlers, many of whom had thrilling experiences with the Indians, predatory animals, etc. Bears would frequently carry off hogs and calves alive, and even break into smoke-houses and take hams and bacon. Wolves would raid the sheep and poultry flocks and play havoc with them. The villagers had declared war on these night prowlers and had reduced their numbers to near zero; but there was one big timber wolf that defied the villagers in their efforts to snare him. Once or twice each week he visited the village and carried away some pet goose or slayed one or more sheep. The villagers finally organized a hunting party with the determination to rid the community of this night marauder. "Uncle Nathan" Harris, as he was commonly known throughout the neighboring country, had two hobbies—hunting and fishing. His prowess with rod and gun was well known by the entire neighborhood. I quote from "History of Wayne County"—"When an old man, Nathan Harris shot the last timber wolf killed in this locality. The animal had become known far and wide by its depredations. A hunting party was finally formed to rid the community of this marauder. As Uncle Nathan was now well along in years, he was allowed to follow the road, while the rest of the men spread out in the timber on either side. As Nathan rode along the road on his old horse, the wolf came into the road just a few rods ahead of him. Nathan urged his horse to a gallop to close up the interval between, raised his gun and fired under full headway, and the creature was killed. *** In the spring time his long fowling piece brought down many a duck while flying over, and bullets known to be his, from the great weight of the ball, were chopped out of trees by the settlers, even after his death. His log house stood on the north end of Wintergreen Hill. Beyond the house, on the west side of the road,

was a spring in which Harris kept a pet trout. One day a friend, possessed of a large red nose, called at the Harris home for a visit. A social glass was followed by a stroll over the farm, and ultimately the walk led to the spring. The friend got down on his all-fours for a drink, while Harris looked on. As the red nose neared the water, out sprang the trout and seized it, while on the instant, a quick upward toss of the head landed the trout full ten feet to the rear. Harris returned the trout to the spring and informed the bewildered friend that the time was propitious for fishing and a fine lot was taken that afternoon. The name 'Trout Harris,' given in consequence of this incident, became widely known."

Rev. Horace Eaton, a popular pioneer clergyman of Palmyra, gives the following pen picture of settlement of Palmyra—"The practical strong-minded walk forth to observe the strength of the soil and to take in the lay of the land. The romantic spirits among them, admire the height and hue of the outbudding trees, and catch the spirit of the deep, glorious woods. Of the girls, one seeks the wild flowers, another watches the birds that sing among the branches. Of the boys, one is preparing to catch the salmon or the bass in the untried stream, another with bow and arrow takes a shot at a partridge drumming on a log. Some, perhaps, trace with apprehension, the remains of an old wigwam or Indian trail. They see the marks of bears' claws upon the trees, or hear the snarling of the wolves. Soon the axe gives its clear metallic ring through these valleys. The giant monarchs of the forest creak, groan and come tumbling to the ground. Fires roar and rush through the dry fallow. In the dim night, flames gleam from either side along the creek. Smoke obscures the sun, giving the day the mystic hue of Indian summer. The sprouting wheat grows among the stumps. The reapers sing as they cradle and bind the sheaves. Rude, pleasant homes rise along the hillsides. The buzz of the wheel and the stroke of the loom tell of domestic industry. Nuptials are celebrated in homespun. Little children look out of the window and run among the trees. The town meeting is called. The school house goes up. Each has a helping hand for the new-comer, and to harvest the wheat of a sick brother. The funeral filing through the woods to the final resting place calls out a lone and sympathetic procession, and it does not cost the living the last pittance to bury their dead."

FIRST NEWSPAPER

The first newspaper published in Palmyra was the "Palmyra Register," published by Timothy C. Strong. The first issue came off the press November 26, 1817. It was a small four page sheet with patent medicine advertisements smeared all over the front page, and the circulation never exceeded 400. Mr. Strong changed the name of his paper several times, finally selling it in 1823 to E. B. Grandin and Pomeroy Tucker, who changed the name from "Western Farmer and Canal Advocate," to "Wayne Sentinel." Mr. Grandin was majority owner and manager; Mr. Tucker was editor and publisher. About ten years later, Mr. Grandin sold his interests to Mr. Tucker, and retired, moving to Albany. Mr. Tucker, with John H. Gilbert, their pressman, as his assistant, published the paper for another twenty years. This paper had the biggest circulation of any paper in the county, was popular as a medium for advertising, and wielded considerable influence politically.

On March 11, 1828, the "Palmyra Freeman" made its first appearance in the then thriving village. D. O. Stephens was publisher and chief owner, but the paper was soon sold to J. A. Hailey, who moved it to Lyons, the county seat.

During this same period, when Palmyra was experiencing an era of prosperity, another weekly sheet made its appearance, called "The Reflector." It was a small weekly sheet, referred to by Professor McIntosh in his "History of Wayne County," as a paper "given over to science, amusement and ironical castigation."

This paper was published by Obediah Dogberry, and after a brief run of three years went into a total eclipse.

Another pioneer paper made its appearance in Palmyra on January 9, 1831, called "The Western Spectator and Wayne Advertiser." This paper was published by Luther Howard and Erasmus Shepherd. They changed the name to "The Spectator and Anti-Masonic Star," but shortly afterward, merged it with the "Anti-Masonic Inquirer" at Rochester.

The first school-house in Palmyra was erected in 1793, in what was then known as the "Rhode Island Settlement," now East Palmyra. It was also used as a place for worship, and for all public meetings, for fourteen years. In 1806 a mass meeting was called to discuss the propriety of building a place of worship.

Oliver Clark offered \$100.00, if the church was built on the north side of Mud Creek, and \$50.00, if on the south side. Humphrey Sherman offered \$100.00, if built on the south side, nothing if on the north side. After a somewhat heated discussion, the south side won out. Humphrey Sherman, who was the wealthiest land owner in town, donated half the ground and his brother-in-law, Gideon Durfee, the other half. The building was so nearly finished in 1807 that they began to use it for worship, but it was not dedicated until 1810, after which it was given over to the Presbyterian form of government and was placed under the Geneva Presbytery, with Rev. Benjamin Bailey as pastor.

Seven years later those of the Presbyterian persuasion in Palmyra complained of the inconvenience of going to East Palmyra to attend services, and it was decided to divide the congregations. Accordingly, on February 26, 1817, the Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra was organized with fifty-six communicants. The chapel was erected adjacent to the village cemetery on Church Street, opposite the present St. Anne's Catholic Church.

The First Baptist Church of Palmyra was organized in 1800. A chapel was erected by the side of the road leading to Macedon on the west, and, when the township was later divided, the chapel was on Macedon domain, but the Palmyrans continued to worship at the old chapel until 1835. Then a new organization was effected and a new chapel erected in Palmyra village.

It is not definitely known just when Methodism was first preached in Palmyra, as the pioneer pastors were "Circuit Riders," who covered quite an extensive territory in their missionary work, paying much attention to rural work, preaching in groves in summer and school-houses during the winter. For a time in Palmyra, they preached in a grove on Vienna Street during the summer and in a log school-house on Durfee Street during the winter. For some reason not fully explained by our pioneer historians, they met with some opposition from the other churches. Revival, or camp-meetings were quite common with the Methodist preachers of pioneer days. They built a chapel in 1822.

Zion Episcopal Parish was organized June 23, 1823. For six years they held their meetings in the academy building occu-

pying a site near where the Catholic Church now stands. Their first chapel was consecrated February 1, 1828.

St. Anne's Congregation (Catholic) was organized about 1849. Rev. Edmund O'Connor, pastor of St. Mary's at Canandaigua, came over occasionally and held mass in the Williamson Hall. The Catholics were few in number then, the membership being made up largely, if not wholly, of emigrants from Ireland. But their numbers gradually increased until now they have the largest number of communicants of any church in the village, and they are not all from Ireland.

At present, Palmyra, with her 2,700 population, has nine congregations or churches, viz: Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Dutch Reformed, Church of God, Christian Scientists and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, commonly called "Mormons." This furnishes a most diversified spiritual menu for a village of that size, especially when we stop to think that a very large percentage, (probably 40 or 50 per cent) of its citizens profess no active affiliation with any church.

Palmyra has been the home of many prominent men. Some were outstanding in the pioneer development of the community; some were later prominent in civic, military, educational, religious and business activities. If I were to even briefly mention the outstanding accomplishments of these men, it would make these articles too lengthy for a local paper. But there is one family that has attracted more attention, and caused more publicity, not only while the family was living in the neighborhood, but after they moved to other parts, than any other family that ever lived in the village. They not only attracted publicity, but now draw more visitors, and incidentally create business and are making history at the present time. And this booklet is written mostly for the benefit of the present generation that they may possibly get a different viewpoint from that set forth by most of the pioneer writers.

JOSEPH SMITH, Sr., AND FAMILY ARRIVE IN PALMYRA

It was in the spring of 1816 that a man, Joseph Smith, sr., by name, who had met with financial reverses in the state of Vermont, through crop failures, the treachery of a friend, etc., hearing good reports from other New Englanders, who had come to Palmyra, decided that he would make a trip hither to seek a

suitable place for himself and family. He found the place all that it had been represented to be and the villagers friendly and neighborly. Palmyra was then a thriving village. He had no trouble in finding work, and immediately wrote his wife to prepare to bring the family at the earliest convenience. In due time, he sent a Mr. Howard back to Vermont, with a team and wagon, to bring the family. After a 24 day trip replete with hardships as a result of bad roads and at times no road at all—and the treachery of the teamster, who finally left them at Utica, they arrived at Palmyra all but worn out and penniless.

In the meantime, Mr. Smith had rented a small frame building on the eastern outskirts of the village near where Johnson Street takes off Vienna. The Smith family at this time consisted of the father and mother and eight children. The oldest boy, Alvin, was a husky fellow of seventeen years, while Don Carlos, the youngest was a babe in arms, scarce six months old. After settling in their little domicile on Vienna Street, they lost no time in seeking employment, having in mind to secure land to develop a farm as soon as they were able to make a payment. Alvin had no trouble finding work as a carpenter's helper, with a crew building pioneer houses. The father was an all-around handy man with tools, a cooper, could make split-wood chairs, split-wood baskets, birch brooms, and knew enough about masonry to dig wells and curb them, dig cisterns and line them; also he could build rough fireplaces and stone walls. He sometimes took work by contract and would use Hyrum and sometimes Joseph, jr., to assist him. Mrs. Smith was a good cook and handy at certain kinds of fancy work. The oldest daughter, Sophronia, also proved a big help, especially after they established a cake and root-beer business, which they plied on Saturdays and holidays.

I quote from the "History of Wayne County" by McIntosh—"Mormonism had its origin with the family of Joseph Smith, sr., who came from Royalton, Vermont, in 1816 and settled in the village of Palmyra. **** On arriving at Palmyra, the elder Smith and his wife opened a "cake and beer shop," as his sign indicated, and the profits of the shop, combined with occasional earnings by himself and oldest sons at harvesting, digging wells, and other common employments, enabled him to provide an honest living for the family."

During a brief term in the winter, the children, who were of

school age, attended the little log school-house on Durfee Road. That the reader may get some idea as to the schools of that period I again quote from "Wayne County History"—"The first assembly of the settlers was in 1793. During that year two school-houses were erected, one on a site given by General John Swift in Palmyra village, and one on ground given by Humphrey Sherman in East Palmyra. Both were built of logs. **** The first day and the last were most critical for the teacher. On the first day of commencement, the teacher's government was tested, and his education decided by his ability to work out some of the hardest sums, and if all proved favorable, he was the man of influence in the community in which he 'boarded around.' **** There was spelling, ciphering, and parsing. There was 'single and double rule of three,' 'loss and gain', 'square and cube root,' and 'single and double position,' all of which had to be surmounted in from eight to twelve weeks."

As new settlers continued to arrive from the New England Colonies, and danger from Indians grew less, and predatory animals were reduced to a minimum, people began to venture farther into the wilderness and develop farms. Developing a farm in most localities meant first to remove a forest, then clearing the ground of shrubs and vines and seeding corn, wheat, potatoes, beans and other crops among the stumps for three or more years. It was customary to fell the trees one year, log them up and drag them into winrows the first year, usually with oxen, and burn them up the second year and sell the ashes to one of the asheries in the village. The wheat was broadcast among the stumps, harrowed with a wooden peg-toothed harrow, or dragged over with a large limb of a maple or oak tree. Owing to the decayed leaves and vegetation under the trees the soil was very productive and crops grew prolific.

The Smith family had been doing fairly well up to this time. I quote from Mother Smith—"It was now only two years since we entered Palmyra, almost destitute of money, property or acquaintances. The hand of friendship was extended on every side, and we blessed God with our whole hearts for his mercy which endureth forever."

I also take the following from "History of Wayne County"—"The shop with its confectionery, ginger-bread and root-beer, and such articles, was well patronized by the village and country youth,

and on holidays and public occasions did a lively business. A hand-cart fashioned by Joseph Smith, sr., was employed to peddle the wares through the streets. In the meantime, Mr. Smith had negotiated with a land agent at Canandaigua for one hundred acres of timbered land about two miles south of Palmyra in the town of Manchester. Anticipating a removal thither, a small log house was built. This bark-roofed house had two rooms on the ground floor, and the garret had also two divisions."

Again I quote from Mother Smith's book—"My husband and his sons, Alvin and Hyrum, set themselves to work to pay for one hundred acres for which Mr. Smith had contracted with a land agent. In a year, we made nearly all of the first payment, erected a log house and commenced clearing."

This little log house, which nestled among the trees of the forest, was only intended as a temporary abode, and, as early as 1819 they began to make plans for a larger home. I quote from "Phelps-Gorham Purchase" by Turner—"Joseph Smith, sr., father of the prophet, Joseph, jr., came from Royalton, Vt. He first settled in Palmyra but as early as 1819 was occupant of some new land in Stafford Street Road in the town of Manchester, near the Palmyra line. Here the author remembers to have first met the family, in the winter of 1819-20, in a rude log house, with but a small spot of underbrush (clearing) around it."

Again from Mother Smith's book—"The following spring (1820) we commenced to make preparations for building another house, one that would be more comfortable for persons advanced in years."

A RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

In the year 1819 a sort of religious awakening started in Massachusetts, gradually moving down the eastern seaboard gathering momentum as it spread until it became a veritable religious contagion. After reaching New York it spread to the rural districts upstate, reaching Palmyra and vicinity in the spring of 1820. It appears that Rev. Jesse Townsend, a young Yale graduate, but recently set apart for the ministry and assigned to the pastorate of the new Presbyterian Church of Palmyra, was the first in these parts to catch the religious fervor, and accordingly started a revival. He was soon joined by the Presbyterian

minister of East Palmyra, closely followed by the Baptist minister and two Methodist ministers of Palmyra.

The revival started the latter part of April, before the rural people could get onto their land to begin spring plowing, which gave the farmers a chance to attend the meetings. Even business and professional men neglected their work and all but shut up shop. By the first of May, the revival was well under way with scores of people confessing religion, and each new convert becoming a self appointed missionary to solicit friend and neighbor. The prevailing question among people of the neighborhood was, "What shall I do to be saved?"

Beginning with the second week in May, the bright spring weather began to make the farmers anxious to get busy with their spring work, as about this time of the year, they can begin to plow on high ground and prepare the soil for seeding early crops. The revival had been even more successful than the ministers had anticipated. I quote from the "Religious Advocate" of Rochester—"More than 200 souls have become hopeful subjects of divine grace in Palmyra, Macedon, Manchester, Lyons and Ontario since the late revival commenced. This is a powerful work. It is among young as well as old people. Many are ready to exclaim—'What hath God wrought?' It is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes. The cry is yet from many, 'Come over and help us.' *** Such intelligence must be pleasing to every child of God, who rightly estimates the value of immortal souls, and wish well to the cause of Zion."

A week later—"**** It may be added that in Palmyra and Macedon, including Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist churches, more than 400 have already confessed that the Lord is good. The work is still progressing. In neighboring towns, the number is great and still increasing. Glory be to God on high: and on earth peace and good will to all men."

During the second week in May the revival began to show signs of breaking up, and the many converts were solicited by the different preachers to join their respective churches. This caused considerable rivalry and contention among the ministers. So warm did this contention become that harsh accusations were hurled by certain of their numbers. It was during this stage that one of the Methodist ministers took his text from the first chapter of James, fifth and sixth verses, which reads as follows: "If any of you lack

wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not: and it shall be given unto him. But let him ask in faith nothing wavering. **** ” The minister made a special appeal to those who were yet undecided, those who could not make up their minds and were procrastinating the day of their repentance. It was rather effective and found ready response with a young lad, named Joseph Smith, who was present with his parents. Four members of the Smith family had been proselyted over to the Presbyterian Church and had rather urged him to do likewise. But while the family resided in the village, Joseph had attended the Methodist meetings in the grove on Vienna Street, and joined a class of boy probationers, and naturally favored that church. Joseph's religious nature was now deeply aroused. He felt more concerned about salvation than ever before, but could not account for the contention among the ministers. Joseph Smith, at this time was 14 years of age and had never made the teachings of the respective churches of the vicinity a minute study, hence he did not know that there was any particular difference in their doctrines, but he now felt much concerned as to which church he should join. The family Bible and the "Christian Almanac" with patent medicine recipes, made up the principal reading matter of the average home during the pioneer days of Palmyra, and when he got home that evening he got the family Bible and looked up the first chapter of James and read the minister's text—"If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God who giveth to every man liberally and upbraideth not." He read it again and again, and the more he read it, the more it impressed itself on his mind. He lacked wisdom. He was worried, and wanted to know which of the churches was right, and which he should join. He definitely made up his mind to take James, who spoke for the Lord, at his word, and carry out his instructions. It was not unlike signing a promissory note with the Lord. He could scarcely sleep during the night for thinking about it, and even made up his mind where he would go to put it to the test.

He got up quite early the next morning and, without saying anything to any member of the family, started for the forest west of the house, passing through the clearing where his father and older brothers had been felling trees the day before. He passed the axes sticking in a stump where they had chopped quite a large tree down the day before, and went farther into the woods. Fin-

ally, coming to a secluded spot, he looked about to make sure that there were no spectators to the scene, and then timidly knelt down to pray. At this point, I shall let Orson Pratt relate the incident as it was related to him by Joseph Smith. Parley P. Pratt, an Evangelist of no mean ability, of the Sect of Disciples Church, organized by Alexander Campbell, stepped off a canal boat at Newark, N. Y., with a view to doing evangelistic work in Wayne County. He had not proceeded far in his work when he heard of a new religious movement in the vicinity of Palmyra. He had an urge to investigate and accordingly headed for Palmyra some nine miles away. Joseph Smith, jr., was in Harmony, Pa., at this time, but he contacted Joseph's father and brother, Hyrum. Obtaining much desired information he was accompanied by Hyrum to Fayette, Seneca County, where he interviewed Oliver Cowdery who had assisted Joseph in translating the Book of Mormon. He became intensely interested and wrote to his brother, Orson, who came to Palmyra a little later.

The Pratts were born in Rensselaer County, beyond the Hudson. They became scholars, writers, poets, theologians—and Orson, a recognized scientist of his day. He relates the incident of Joseph Smith's first vision thus—"While thus pouring out his soul, anxiously desiring an answer from God, he saw a very bright and glorious light in the heavens above, which at first seemed to be at considerable distance. He continued praying while the light appeared to be gradually descending toward him; and, as it drew nearer, it increased in brightness and magnitude, so that by the time it reached the tops of the trees, the whole wilderness was illuminated in a most brilliant and glorious manner. He expected to see the leaves and boughs of the trees consumed as the light came in contact with them, but, perceiving that it did not produce that effect, he was encouraged with the hope of being able to endure its presence. It continued descending slowly, until it rested upon the earth and he was enveloped in the midst of it. When it first came upon him, it produced a peculiar sensation throughout his whole system, and immediately his mind was caught away from the natural objects with which he was surrounded, and he was enwrapped in a heavenly vision, and saw two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in their features or likeness. One of them spake unto him, calling him by name, and said, pointing to the other—"This is my beloved

Son, hear him!’ Among other things he was informed that his sins were forgiven. He was also informed upon the subjects which had for some days previously agitated his mind—namely, that all the religious organizations of the day were believing in incorrect doctrines, and consequently that none of them was acknowledged of God as his church and kingdom.

“And he was expressly commanded to join none of them, but received the promise that the true way, and the fullness of the gospel, should, at some future time be made known unto him. After which the vision withdrew, leaving his mind in a state of calmness and peace indescribable.”

The above recital of one of the most glorious of all visions recorded in history, helps us to fix the approximate date on which it took place. The revival meeting in the village, which led up to the prayer and vision in the grove, began the latter part of April, and ended in the forepart of May. Orson Pratt, who came to Palmyra in 1830, got first hand information from Joseph Smith. He speaks of the leaves and boughs overhead, and expected to see them consumed when the brilliant light came in contact with them, but on observing that they were not affected by the contact, the alarm or fear seemed to leave him and he became resigned to his fate. The vision took place early in the spring of the year 1820. Early in the spring of the year in New York State is early in May. The writer of these articles has spent 23 springs on the Joseph Smith homestead on which is the grove, made sacred by this remarkable vision which took place there, and there has never been any signs of foliage on the trees or shrubs before the fifth of May, and not enough to make any showing before the tenth or twelfth of May. The farmer tries to get his oats seeded by the fifteenth of May, which would be not far from the date of the vision.

It should be kept in mind that Joseph Smith, jr., at this time was a mere lad of boy scout age, being only 14 years of age, with no breadth of experience and no education except what he could get by attending the rural school, which only ran 12 to 16 weeks per year. Therefore, he was wholly incapable of building up in his imagination, any fantastic scheme, as early pioneer writers in Palmyra pictured him, to dupe or deceive his father and mother, later the community, still later the state and nation, and at present all civilization, for it now attracts international attention. No! He had seen a marvelous vision. He returned from the grove, light of

heart and with an elastic tread. As he entered the log house his mother was preparing breakfast on the old fireplace, as they had no stove. His heart was full. He leaned against the mantle over the fireplace, and began to relate his experience to his mother. She listened with rapture for a moment, then checking Joseph called in other members of the family to listen to his recital of his marvelous experience. They were amazed at his story, but, for the moment, were unable to fully grasp the significance and bigness of it, and what it all meant. They knew Joseph. They knew that he would not wilfully deceive them, and that he was incapable of manufacturing a story so grand and glorious. They believed his story which finished as follows: "And many other things were said unto me which I am not permitted to divulge at this time."

JOSEPH CALLS ON HIS MINISTER

The first opportunity Joseph had to go to the village, he called on the minister who had taken his text from the first chapter of James, which gave Joseph the incentive to put it to the test, and unhesitatingly related his experience to him. I shall here let Joseph tell in his own words, just what happened: "I was greatly surprised at his behaviour. He treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying that it was all of the devil; that there were no such things as visions and revelations from God in these days; that all such things ceased with the apostles and that there would never be any more of them. *** But I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light, saw two personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me, falsely, for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I had actually seen a vision and who was I that I could withstand God, or why should the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision: I knew it and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it. At least, I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation."

Up to the time that Joseph Smith divulged the details of his vision in the grove to his minister, the reputation of the Smith family was untarnished. But from this time on, Joseph was

shunned by his former associates, his story ridiculed, which reflected itself on the balance of the family, who were frequently jeered by people of the neighborhood. It also became more difficult for them to earn a livelihood in the community. But being "handy with tools," and industrious, they erected a small cooper-shop where they made barrels, split-wood chairs, split-wood baskets, sap-bowls, bee-gums, etc. I quote from "Wayne County History" by McIntosh—"The Smiths obtained a livelihood from their land by the sale of cordwood, split-wood chairs, baskets, birch-brooms, maple syrup, and on public days, resumed their cake and beer business in the village."

Also from Tucker's "Rise and Progress of Mormonism"—The chief application of the useful industry of the Smiths during their residence upon the farm-lot, was chopping and retailing cordwood, the raising and bartering of small crops of agricultural products and garden vegetables, the manufacture and sale of black-ash baskets, birch-brooms, and the making of maple sugar and molasses in the season for that work, and continuing the business of peddling cake and beer in the village on days of public doing." Many quotations from early writers might be cited to show that the Smiths were ambitious and industrious, ever ready to accept any honorable work in order to gain a livelihood for their large family.

When spring arrived, 1821, they were still in their log house which was erected in the fall of 1818 as a temporary abode, and, now that the stork was due to arrive in the not distant future with a package, it became necessary for them to add a slab addition to their log house to provide a room for the new arrival. Lucy, their ninth and last child, was born July 18, 1821.

Alvin, the oldest son, got a job as a carpenter's helper in the village soon after their arrival from Vermont in 1816. The unpopularity and persecution against the Smith family that flared up as a result of Joseph's heavenly vision in the grove, had now, to a certain extent, subsided, and the villagers and rural neighbors seemed to become more friendly, and they had less trouble finding employment. They had to develop a farm by removing a forest, which meant much hard work. They also had to meet the payments on the land when due, and make a living on the side. They had also planned to erect a larger house more in keeping with the size of the family. Accordingly, in the fall of 1822, they planned

to get busy as soon as possible after the harvest season and erect a more comfortable home. I quote from the first edition of Mother Smith's book printed in England in 1853—"We were still making arrangements to build us a comfortable home, the management and control of which devolved chiefly on Alvin. And when November arrived, 1822, the frame was raised, and all the materials necessary for its speedy completion were procured. This opened to Alvin's mind the pleasing prospect of seeing his father and mother once more comfortable and happy. He would say—"I am going to have a nice pleasant room for father and mother to sit in and everything arranged for their comfort, and they shall not work any more as they have done."

Pomeroy Tucker, part owner in the "Wayne Sentinel," when the Book of Mormon was printed, was very prejudiced, as the following quotation from his book, "Origin and Progress of Mormonism," will show—"The Smiths occupied as their dwelling-place, a small one story, smoky log-house, which they had built on their land prior to moving there. This was divided into two rooms on the ground floor, and had a low garret in two parts. A bedroom wing built of sawed slabs was afterward added. *** But little improvement was made upon the land by the Smith family in the way of clearing, fencing or tillage. Some time before quitting the premises, they erected a small frame-house thereon, partly enclosed it but it was never finished by them. In this they lived during the remainder of their time there, putting their original log hut to use as a barn."

Also from "Landmarks of Wayne County"—"Because of the crowded condition of the Smith family in their little log-house, they were anxious to get into more commodious quarters. Alvin, the oldest son, took the initiative in erecting a new house, which they moved into in the spring of 1823, before it was finished."

JOSEPH VISITED BY THE ANGEL MORONI

Nearly three and a half years had now elapsed since Joseph beheld the marvelous vision in the grove on his father's farm. During this time, he was shunned by his former boy associates and seldom ventured to the village except when accompanied by some member of the family, and even then would often hear jibes and slurring crack-wise remarks about his "mid-day night mare" which greatly depressed him at times. To hear a vision so glorious

and grand, spoken of jokingly in the spirit of ridicule, was almost more than he could stand. In returning from the village with his father one evening, feeling blue and discouraged, a social outcast so far as his former friends were concerned, he became unusually meditative and retired to his room in that mood. He felt humble and submissive. He remembered that, on the occasion of his vision in the grove, he was told by the heavenly personage who spoke to him, that the "true way would be made known unto him in due time." He seemed to fear, lest he had done something that was displeasing to the Lord, and that he had lost favor with him. So, when he prepared to retire for the night, he knelt down and in all earnestness poured out his soul in prayer, asking God to forgive him of his sins, and to reveal unto him what he could do to make amends. And while thus engaged, he noticed that his room began to get light, and continued to increase in brightness until it exceeded the sun at noon-day, when, suddenly in the midst of the light, he beheld a personage standing near his bed with his feet a little above the floor. I shall again let Orson Pratt relate the incident. "It seemed as though the house was filled with consuming fire. This sudden appearance of a light so bright, caused a shock of sensation visible to the extremities of the body. It was, however, followed by a calmness and serenity of mind, and an overwhelming rapture of joy, that surpassed understanding, and in a moment, a personage stood before him. Notwithstanding the brightness of the light, which previously illuminated the room, there seemed to be an additional glory surrounding or accompanying this personage, which shone with an increased degree of brilliancy, of which he was in the midst, and though his countenance was as lightning, yet it was of a pleasing, innocent and glorious appearance, so much so, that every fear was banished from Joseph's heart, and nothing but calmness pervaded his soul.

"The statue of this personage was a little above the average man in size. His garment was perfectly white and had the appearance of being without seam. This glorious being declared himself as being an angel sent forth by commandment to communicate to him that his prayers were heard and that his sins were forgiven; also to bring the joyful tidings that the covenant which God made with ancient Israel concerning their posterity was at hand to be fulfilled; that the great preparatory work for the

second coming of the Messiah was speedily to commence; that the time was at hand for the gospel, in its fullness, to be preached in power unto all nations, that a people might be prepared for the millennial reign."

Joseph Smith, jr., relates his experience as follows: "He called me by name, and said unto me, that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God; that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; that my name should be had for good or evil among all nations, kindreds and tongues; and that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people. He said there was a book deposited in a hill, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from which they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants; also that there were two stones in silver bows, and these stones, fastened to a breast-plate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted "seers" in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book. *** While he was conversing with me about the plates, the vision was opened to my mind and I could see the hill and the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place when I visited it next day."

The messenger also quoted many prophecies from the Old and New Testaments pertaining to the past, present and future, and gave their interpretation after which Joseph quote: "I saw the light in the room gather around the person of him who had been speaking to me, he disappeared, only to return twice more during the night. On each visit he repeated the same instructions, adding that the Lord had a work to do on the earth and if I remained humble and faithful, I should be an instrument in His hands in helping to bring it forth."

Father Smith went upstairs quite early next morning to call the boys so they could eat breakfast and get an early start with the farm work. At this time they were clearing trees and shrubs from a field back of the little hill east of the house, preparatory to seeding it to wheat. Whether or not Joseph's father had been unconsciously influenced by the prevailing opinion of the villagers,

as regards Joseph's first vision, we are not told. But it is apparent that during the three years and five months intervening between the first vision, which took place in the grove, and this present vision in his bed-room, he had overheard remarks from some member, or members, of the family suggesting doubt in the reality of the first vision. At any rate, for some reason, Joseph did not divulge to any member of the family what had taken place during the night, but proceeded to the field with his father and his brother, Alvin, to assist in the farm work. It was not until his brother, Alvin, had noticed that Joseph would stop work occasionally to meditate, and called his father's attention to it, that they noticed anything unusual about his actions. Even when his father approached him to persuade him to return to the house and lie down, and have his mother make some herb tea for him, he did not tell his father his experience of the night before. I quote from Joseph's own story—"I started with the intention of going to the house, but in attempting to cross over a fence, after leaving the field, my strength failed me, and I fell helpless on the ground, and for a time was quite unconscious of anything. The first thing that I can recollect was a voice speaking unto me, calling me by name. I looked up, and beheld the same messenger standing over my head, surrounded by a light as before. He then related unto me all that he had related the night before and commanded me to go to my father and tell him of the vision and the commandments I had received.

"I obeyed. I returned to my father in the field, and rehearsed the whole matter to him. He replied to me that it was of God, and to proceed to carry out the angel's instructions. I left the field and went to the place where the angel had told me the plates were deposited, and, owing to the distinctness of the vision, which I had concerning it, I knew the place the instant I arrived there. Convenient to the village of Manchester, N. Y., stands a hill of considerable size, and the most elevated of any in the neighborhood. On the west side of the hill, not far from the top, under a stone of considerable size, lay the plates, deposited in a stone box."

I will here quote the words of Oliver Cowdery who acted as principal scribe during the translation of the gold plates—"At the bottom of this (excavation) lay a stone of considerable size, the upper surface being smooth. At each edge was placed a large quantity of cement, and into this cement, at the four edges of this

stone were placed erect four others, their bottom edges resting in the cement at the outer edges of the first stone. This formed a box. The corners where the edges of the four came in contact, were also cemented so firmly that the moisture from without was prevented from entering. This box was sufficiently large to admit a breastplate such as was worn by the ancient Hebrew priests. *** After Joseph Smith arrived at the repository, it took only a little exertion in removing the soil from the edges of the top of the box, and, securing a limb that had fallen from a nearby tree as a lever to pry up the stone, the contents of the box were brought to his natural vision. While viewing with admiration this sacred treasure, behold! the angel of the Lord, who had previously visited him, again stood in his presence, and Joseph's soul was again enlightened as it was the evening before! and he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and the heavens were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about and rested upon him. While he was gazing with wonder and astonishment, the angel said, 'Look!' And as he thus spake, he beheld the Prince of Darkness, surrounded by his innumerable train of associates. All this passed before him, and the heavenly messenger said, 'All this is shown, the good and the evil, the holy and the impure, the glory of God and the power of darkness, that you may know hereafter the two powers, and never be influenced or overcome by the wicked one. *** These plates are not deposited here for the sake of accumulating gain and wealth for the glory of the world. They were sealed by the prayer of faith, and because of the knowledge they contain. In them is contained the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it was given to his people on this continent.' "

Because of the malignant ridicule that was hurled at the Smiths as the result of allowing news of the first vision to become public property, being misunderstood, hence misconstrued and made light of, they decided to keep the facts of this second heavenly vision from reaching the public. They went about their daily routine of work on the farm and in the village, as if nothing unusual had happened.

About two months later, a great shock came to the Smith family, when the oldest son, Alvin, became suddenly ill. They immediately secured a doctor who diagnosed his trouble as colic but seemed unable to relieve his suffering and called in another doctor for consultation, but it seems that their combined skill

could not check the trouble. He continued to suffer intensely for three days when his pains and suffering were relieved by death. A third doctor was called in to perform an autopsy. When they cut him open they found that gangrene had set in. It would be readily recognized in our day as a bursted appendix. Alvin's death took place on November 19, 1823, in the twenty-fifth year of his age. It was a great blow to the Smith family, as his labors as a carpenter's helper contributed much toward the support of the family. Owing to the unexpected death of Alvin, it became necessary to get a carpenter, by the name of Stoddard, in the village to come out and put in the mantles, doors and window jams, and other little finishing touches in their home, before winter set in. The family had lived in the new building in its unfinished state during the summer months.

It might be well to state, at this point, that there has been different opinions as to whether the angel, Moroni, appeared in the little bark-roofed log homestead with two rooms on the ground floor and a divided garret, or in the new nine-room house. Mother Smith tells us that all members of the family were at home that night. Joseph says, "I went to MY room, while praying the angel appeared and stood by MY bed, etc." Joseph does not mention that any of his brothers occupied the room with him, and we have always taken it for granted that he was alone that night, and it would be quite impossible to have had a room alone in a little log-house in a family of eleven. Mother Smith says they had the frame work of the new house up and all the materials on hand for a "speedy completion of the building" in November, 1822, and it doesn't look reasonable that they would leave the materials lying about until 1824 in all kinds of weather, without completing the building. Local historians say that the Smiths moved into the new building in the spring of 1823 before it was finished; and that Alvin, who took the initiative in erecting it, died in the fall of the same year. Alvin's tombstone, which is perfectly legible yet, reads as follows: "In memory of Alvin Smith, son of Joseph and Lucy Smith, died November 19, 1823, in the 25th year of his age." This checks with his birth date which was February 11, 1799. It is quite evident that the tombstone was placed at the grave authoritatively by Alvin's father as the engraver moved to Pultneyville soon after the Smith family left for Kirtland, Ohio, and another engraver took his place using altogether another style of engrav-

ing. It is also apparent from the following notice that Alvin died in 1823, as his tombstone states, and not in 1824:

“NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC”

“Whereas reports have been industriously put in circulation, that my son, Alvin, had been removed from the place of interment and dissected, which reports, every person possessed of human sensibility must know, are peculiarly calculated to harrow up the mind of a parent and deeply wound the feelings of relations; therefore, for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of such reports, I, with some of my neighbors, this morning repaired to the grave, and removing the earth, found the body which had not been disturbed.

“This method is taken for the purpose of satisfying the minds of those who may have heard these reports, and of informing those who have put them in circulation, that it is earnestly requested that they would desist therefrom; and that it is believed by some, that they have been circulated more by a desire to injure the reputation of certain persons than by a philanthropy for the peace and welfare of myself and friends.”

Joseph Smith, sr.

September 25, 1824

It will readily be observed from the date of this notice, which appeared in six consecutive issues of the Wayne Sentinel, that Alvin had died, an autopsy was performed, he was buried, and the country became filled with another flood of gossip; the body exhumed and examined and covered up again, two months before he was dead, according to certain records extant. The facts are that Alvin took the lead and supervised the erection of the new building during the winter of 1822-23; that they moved into the new building while it was yet in an unfinished state, and that Alvin died in the fall of the same year, November 19, 1823, before he had a chance to add the finishing touches to the new home. The first edition of “Mother Smith’s History,” printed in England in 1853, set the date for building the new home as November, 1822, but when the “Reorganite” Church was organized, they got out an edition in 1860, at Plano, Ill., inserting, immediately following the original date of 1822, (1824?) The next edition they got out, they left out the original date and inserted 1824 without any question mark. This is where our historians were led astray.

Note—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, commonly called Mormon Church, was organized April 6, 1830. For incidents connected with the Smith family prior to this time, the church historians were dependent on memories of certain people. But memory is not altogether dependable. I quote from early church history—"The family of Joseph Smith, sr., left the state of Vermont and moved to Palmyra, New York, when Joseph, jr., was in his tenth year, or thereabouts." The family arrived during the summer of 1816, and as Joseph was born December 23, 1805, he would be ten years old, or in the eleventh year of his age. Again—"About four years after their arrival in Palmyra, they moved into Manchester." In October, 1818, the senior Joseph Smith negotiated for a 100-acre tract of forest land and built a log cabin on it; hence, history should read, "About two years," not "four." Again—"His family consisted of eleven souls." Their youngest daughter, Lucy, was born July 18, 1821, which was five years after their arrival from Vermont, and so there were only "ten souls." Again—"Alvin, (the oldest son) died November 19, 1824, in the 27th year of his age." Alvin was born February 11, 1799, and died November 19, 1823, in the 25th year of his age. Again—"Some time in the second year after they moved to Manchester there was much excitement over religion, etc." If the family lived four years in Palmyra, and the religious agitation took place two years later, it would place the date of the vision in the Sacred Grove in the spring of 1822. But as the Smith family only lived in Palmyra two years and three months, it will readily be seen that our historians have two too many years jammed into the period between the arrival of the Smiths in 1816 and the date of the vision in the spring of 1820.

Up to this time the Smith family had kept the secret of Moroni's visit well guarded, but during the summer of 1824 there was a small leak that soon grew larger. During the fall of 1824 Joseph Smith, sr., and his son, Hyrum, were walling a basement and digging and curbing a well for Martin Harris. Mr. Harris exhibited an unusual interest in Joseph's vision in the grove, stating that he was much interested in it at the time, and had since given it considerable thought. Mr. Smith, observing his sincerity, loosened up and told him all the particulars. Each day while they were there, Martin would find excuse to bring up the matter and would ask many questions, referring frequently to the Bible to prove that heavenly messengers visiting the earth, was not a new doctrine. Finally, during the course of their conversations, Mr. Smith took Martin into his confidence and told him of Joseph's wonderful experience with the angel, Moroni. Martin was thrilled beyond expression. He requested that he be kept posted on any new developments, offering to assist in any way possible, and promising not to spread the information to his neighbors. But it was too good to keep to himself. He just had to tell somebody, so he took his wife into his confidence, and after discord developed between him and his wife, she released the secret to others of the family and also to friends in the neighborhood. I shall quote again

from Mother Smith's book—"I will here observe that no one ever heard anything from us respecting the plates, except a confidential friend, whom my husband had spoken to some two or three years previous. It appears that Satan had now stirred up those who had got a hint of the matter from our friends, to search into it, and make every possible move toward thwarting the purposes of the Almighty."

As soon as it became apparent that Martin Harris had become interested in the Smith family, his wife became hostile and took a determined stand against his having anything to do with them. Martin and his wife were first cousins, and, at times, did not team well together. Local pioneer writers speak of her as a woman with strong will power and a ready tongue. She threatened to leave her husband, and demanded a division of the property. In order to pacify her Martin gave her eighty acres of land, and as there was an old Dominion Law still in effect making it unlawful for a man to deed property to his wife, it became necessary for him to deed the land to his brother, Peter, who, on the same day, deeded it to Martin's wife, thus making it legal.

About this time, November 1st, 1825, a man from Chenango County, by the name of Josiah Staal, came into the neighborhood buying up wheat and flour, which he shipped to New York. He, incidentally, heard that Joseph Smith, jr., had discovered some gold plates in a hill nearby. He called at the Smith home and stayed with them over night. After listening to the story of finding the plates in the hillside, he told them of long existing legends down in Broome County, N. Y., and Susquehanna County, Pa., of ancient silver and gold mines long since abandoned, and that he was interested in certain pits just over the line in Pennsylvania, which he was planning to prospect and develop. He made a proposition that Joseph go down and work for him. The Smiths explained to Mr. Staal that Joseph possessed no magic power, whereby he could locate gold or hidden ore or treasure. But Mr. Staal had taken a liking to the Smith family and was insistent that Joseph enter his employ, and, as Joseph was glad to get employment, he accepted Mr. Staal's proposition and returned with him to Chenango County, and thence to Pennsylvania. As soon as Mr. Staal could hire more men in the neighborhood, he started digging. During the pioneer development of that particular locality, there were enough discoveries in ancient

ruins to keep up a keen interest in digging for relics and treasure. I shall quote briefly from "The Archeological History of New York"—"Many silver ornaments were found near Binghamton, Broome County, N. Y." Again—"West of the river and opposite Sherburne were four or five open caches, close together and four to six feet deep and wide. In a field north were stone chisels, pestles, axes, arrowheads, stone tomahawks, copper implements and many relics, including skeletons, having been plowed up."

Again—"In one part were about two hundred yellow and black jasper arrow-heads, and sixty more in another place. Also a silver band or ring about two inches in diameter, wide but thin and with what appeared to be the remains of a reed pipe within it. A number of stone gouges or chisels, of different shapes, and a piece of mica cut in the form of a heart, the border much decayed and the laminae separated, were also discovered." And thus we might go on and quote literally hundreds of similar finds.

And let us also bear in mind that Joseph Smith and his associates were not the first to delve into the ancient ruins in these parts. Men dug as early as 1822. I quote from the "History of Susquehanna County"—"R. C. Doud asserts that in 1822 he was employed with thirteen others, by Oliver Harper, to dig for gold on Joseph McKune's land. *** He stated that George, a brother of Oliver Harper, was a member of the crew. On the old Indian road from Windsor to Chenango Point, men were digging at the same time, for silver. Mr. Doud further states that he himself had no faith at all, but hired out at so much per day, and it was of no consequence to him whether his employer gained his point or not."

While under the employment of Mr. Stoal, Joseph and his companions boarded at the home of Isaac Hale. I quote from his sworn statement—"Joseph Smith at that time was in the employ of a set of men who were called 'money diggers.' Joseph Smith, with several other money diggers, boarded at my house while they were employed in digging for a mine that they supposed had been opened and worked by the Spaniards many years since. *** This took place about November 17, 1825."

Yes, Joseph Smith, jr., did hire out to Josiah Stoal to work, along with a crew of men to uncover or develop, what was supposed to be an old Spanish silver mine, long since abandoned. This engagement took him to the State of Pennsylvania, about 155 miles from Palmyra. The following month an article appeared

in the "New Orleans Advocate" and was copied by the "Wayne Sentinel" printed in Palmyra. It was originally printed as a semi-humorous joke, but was immediately saddled onto Joseph Smith and was readily used to brand him as a money digger. The article follows:

TREASURE DIGGING

Dear Mr. Armstrong:—Please insert the following and oblige one of your readers.

"WONDERFUL DISCOVERY,—A few days since was discovered in this town, by help of a mineral stone, which becomes transparent when placed in a hat and the light excluded by the face of him who looks into it, provided he is fortune's favorite, a monstrous POTASH KETTLE in the bowels of Mother Earth, filled with the purest bullion. Some attempts have been made to dig it up, but without success. His Satanic Majesty, or some other unseen agent, appears to keep it under marching orders, for no sooner is it dug onto in one place, than it moves off like 'false delusive hope' only to re-appear in some remote place. But its pursuers are now sanguine of success. They have entrenched the kettle all around, and driven a steel ramrod into the ground immediately over it, to break the enchantment. Nothing now remains but to raise its ponderous weight and establish a mint that it may be coined into federal money.—Good news indeed for these hard times By rust on the kettle, and the color of the silver, it is supposed to have been deposited where it now lies, prior to the flood."

From this time on, Joseph Smith was dubbed as a "treasure seeker," "gold digger," "mystic fraud" and "fortune teller," etc. Many of the early writers quoted, verbatim, from the above article.

Another story, that gained wide circulation in Harmony and vicinity, was concerning a peculiar stone in the possession of one Jack Belcher. R. B. Buck narrates as follows—"Belcher bought it because it was said to be a seeing stone. I have often seen it. It was a green stone, with brown, irregular spots on it. It was a little longer than a goose's egg and about the same thickness. When he brought it home and covered it with a hat, Belcher's little boy was one of the first to look into the hat, and, as he did so, he said he saw a candle. The second time he looked in he exclaimed,

'I've found my hatchet!' (It had been lost two years.) He immediately ran for it to the spot shown him through the stone, and it was there. The boy was soon beset by neighbors far and near to reveal to them hidden things, and he succeeded marvelously. Even the wanderings of a lost child were traced by him. The distracted parents came to him three times for directions, and in each case found signs that the child had been in the places he designated, but at last it was found starved to death. Joe Smith conceiving the idea of making a fortune through a similar process of 'seeing,' bought the stone of Belcher and then began his operations in directing where hidden treasure could be found."

I shall quote briefly from local library books to show how the accusation of having a gold digging propensity, followed Joseph Smith.

From "History of Ontario County"—"Legends of hidden treasure had long designated Gold Bible Hill as the repository. Old Joe had dug there, and Young Joe had not only heard his father and mother relate the miraculous tales of buried wealth, but had accompanied his father on one or more of these expeditions."

From "History of Wayne County"—"The stone was finally placed in his hat to shade its marvelous brightness when its services were required. At midnight, dupes, laborers and himself, with lanterns in hand, repaired to the hillside near the Smith home where, following mystic ceremony, digging began by a signal in enjoined silence. Two hours elapsed when, just as the box was about to be unearthed, someone spoke and the treasure vanished. The deception was repeated from time to time in the interval between 1820-27, and despite the illusionary searches for money, he obtained contributions which went toward the maintenance of the family."

From "Wayne County Directory"—"Here the insidious monster, Mormonism, was nursed and cradled, which, like the serpent in Eden, has chosen for its victims the fairest of God's creatures. *** In 1820 they began digging for money for a subsistence. The vocation was noised around among the community and not a few were credulous to believe that they were within reach of a 'chest of gold' which had repeatedly eluded their grasp, and contributed money to the Smiths to carry on their excavations.

They kept their deluded followers in a fervor of excitement while treasure hunting.”

From Tucker’s “Rise and Progress of Mormonism”—“Joe had a curious stone by use of which, most glittering sights were revealed to the mortal eye of the young imposter in the manner stated. He pretended to see where there were hidden treasures of great value, including enormous deposits of gold and silver sealed in earthen pots or iron chests, and buried in the earth in the immediate vicinity of the place where he stood. These discoveries finally became too dazzling for his eyes in daylight, and he had to shade his vision by looking at them in his hat! *** Finally, by spring, 1820, he had gathered contributions enough to defray the expense of digging for buried treasure, the precise hiding-place of which he had discovered by aid of the stone in his hat. *** The favorite place for digging was on the forest hill near his home. All subsequent diggings were conducted substantially as the first, when, just at the moment the money box was within the seer’s grasp, one of the party, being tempted of the devil, SPOKE! The enchantment was broken, and the treasure vanished. *** With slight variation in the incantations, and always with the same result—Smith almost getting hold of the money-chest, but finally losing it by the coincident breaking of the ‘spell’ through some unforseen satanic interposition. By this cause the money would vanish just at the instant of its coming within the necromancer’s mortal grasp.”

They even caught the echo of these weird stories across the Atlantic in England. I quote from the “Edinburgh Review,” printed in London in 1854—“For some years he (Joseph Smith) led a vagabond life, about which little is known, except that he was called ‘Joe Smith, the money digger,’ and that he swindled several simpletons by his pretended skill in the use of the divining-rod. In fact, he was a Yankee Dousterswivel. *** The indignation of his neighbors was naturally roused by the successful frauds of the man whom they had despised as a cheat and a liar from his cradle.”

And thus it was, when the Smith family still resided in Palmyra. Any ridiculous, absurd and sensational story that may have been read in a newspaper or magazine, or heard upon the street, or at the lounging places in the village, that could be changed, distorted and misconstrued to apply to “Joe Smith,” was

saddled onto him, and he became the butt of venomous ridicule and wise-crack jokes. Most of the neighborhood jokes and floating gossip were later assembled by Professor McIntosh and incorporated into "Wayne County History," as the history of Mormonism, and has become stock material for all the anti-Mormon writers, and for each new generation that has grown up, as authoritative Mormon history. I quote from the funeral sermon delivered by the Rev. C. N. Pettengill of the Baptist Church over the earthly remains of Pomeroy Tucker, July 3, 1870—

"Mr. Tucker's last work of a more public character was his 'History of Mormonism.' No man probably was so well qualified as himself to give a versatile account of that imposture, especially in its incipient stages. In this vicinity it had its origin. With the prime mover, Joseph Smith, jr., he was well acquainted, as also with many of the deluded disciples of the pretended prophet. From the office of the 'Wayne Sentinel' the first Mormon Bible was issued. Brought thus into intimate proximity to the fraud, he learned the facts concerning it. These he has given in his work. Had he drawn somewhat on his imagination, he might have made a book that would have been more popular, but it would have been less valuable. It is a standard on the rise and early progress of Mormonism, the most authentic one on the subject, and its value will increase as time takes us farther from the origin of the delusion. *** Pomeroy Tucker never made public profession of religion."

It is rather inconsistent for a man who did not even profess to be a Christian to write a fair, impartial and "authentic" history of a movement that is pre-eminently spiritual in its nature, being based on revelation direct from God to man. Pomeroy Tucker was editor and part-owner of the "Wayne Sentinel" that printed the first edition of the "Book of Mormon."

The following from the "Troy Times"—"In 1867, Pomeroy Tucker published a work on Mormonism, giving the most perfect history of the origin and progress of the delusion ever written."

A MINISTER'S OPINION OF JOSEPH SMITH

Rather a complete summary of local feelings toward the Smith family, is contained in a letter dated December 24, 1833, written

by Rev. Jesse Townsend of the Presbyterian Church, in answer to a letter from Mr. Stiles—

“Mr. Phinias Stiles:

Dear Sir:—Your letter of 29th, ultimo, requesting information concerning the class of people called Mormonites, has been received, and the following is a sketch of their history—

“This sect was started by Joseph Smith, jr., in the vicinity of this village, some four years ago, and the statement I give you is the truth, incredible as it may appear to you, and shows the folly and weakness of the people who have listened to and heeded the impositions and falsehoods propagated by Smith and his associates in iniquity.

“I begin with the leader, ‘Joe,’ as he is, and always has been, called here. For the ten years I have known anything about him, he has been a person of questionable character, of intemperate habits, and latterly a noted money-digger. He lived in a sequestered neighborhood where, with his dupes, his impostures and low cunning gave him a reputation for being ‘smart.’ He has had a stone, into which, when placed in a hat, he pretended to look and see chests of gold buried in the earth. He was also a fortune-teller, and he claimed to know where stolen goods went—probably too well.

“Smith flattered a few of his peculiar community to engage with him in digging for money. After a while many of these got out of patience with his false pretensions and repeated failures, and finally to avoid sneers of those who had been deceived by him, he pretended that he had found, when digging alone, a wonderful curiosity, which he kept closely secreted. After telling different stories about it, and applying different names, he at length called it the GOLDEN PLATE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON. As he was questioned on the subject from time to time, his story assumed a more uniform statement, the term finally given to the marvelous treasure being the ‘Golden Bible.’

In the meantime Joe visited a visionary fanatic by the name of Martin Harris, and told him he had received some golden plates of ancient records from the Lord with a ‘revelation’ to call on him for \$50.00 to enable him to go to Pennsylvania and translate the contents of the plates. At the same time he told Harris that the Lord had revealed to him that they (Smith and Harris) were the only honest men in the world. This at once took with the dupe,

who had especially prided himself with his honesty. The wily deceiver understood this fact and knew this was the assailable point in his victim's visionary mind. The delicious bait was greedily swallowed and the \$50.00 was soon put in the hands of Smith, who cleared for Pennsylvania, or elsewhere.

“At that time Martin Harris was worth five or six thousand dollars, while the Smiths were not worth a cent. The latter used Martin's money freely, and some other men having a great dislike to work, joined Joe in his deceptions, among whom was a sort of schoolmaster named Cowdery, who assisted him in writing or transcribing the ‘Book of Mormon’ as a pretended translation of the gold plates, which he affirmed he had been directed, by the Spirit of the Lord, to dig from the earth. This was all done in the most secret manner. At the same time, it was assumed to the uninitiated that it would be ‘immediate death’ for any, except the translator, to see the plates. Poor Martin's faith was not apparently strengthened by his pretension, but afterward the ‘command’ was modified, and he claimed to have seen the plates with his ‘spiritual eyes.’

“This Harris, who is or has been second in authority among the Mormonites, was an industrious farmer, living near the village, who had been unfortunate in the choice of a wife, or she had been in the choice of a husband. Like his leader, he gives to their preachers the power to preach and put their proselytes under water by authority of the ‘new revelation.’ He has whipped his wife and beaten her so cruelly and frequently, that she was obliged to seek refuge in separation. *** He is considered here, to this day, a brute in his domestic relations, a fool and a dupe to Smith in religion, and an unlearned, conceited hypocrite, generally. He paid for printing the Book of Mormon, which exhausted all his money and most of his property. Since he went to Ohio, he has attempted to get another wife though, it is believed, he was frustrated in this design by the discovery that he had a living wife here.

All the Mormonites have left this part of our state, and so palpable is their imposture that nothing is here said or thought of the subject, except when inquiries from abroad are occasionally made concerning them. I know of no one now living in this section of the country that ever gave them credence. Joe Smith dare not

come back to Palmyra, from fear of his creditors, for he ran away to avoid their just demands.

“You, sir, may think we treat this matter lightly, but I give you a correct statement. You have asked for the facts, and I give them. We consider the founders and propagators of the Mormon ‘religion’ simply as base imposters, whose sectarian assertions are false and absurd.”

Respectfully yours, etc.,

Rev. Jesse Townsend

Rev. Townsend began his ministerial duties in Palmyra in 1817, and took a very active part at the revival in 1820 that gave Joseph Smith the inspiration to seek God for divine guidance. The Smiths were not in disrepute until Joseph Smith announced to the world, that the heavens had been re-opened and he had been visited by heavenly messengers. But Joseph Smith, by declaring this fact, unwittingly became Public Enemy No. 1.

Again I quote from “Wayne County History”—“Nocturnal depredations occurred among neighbors, and suspicions rested upon the Smith family, but no proof of their being implicated was ever adduced. “A shiftless set” was an appropriate designation of the Smiths, and Joseph, jr., was the worst of the lot. During his minority he is recalled as indolent and mendacious. In appearance, he was dull-eyed, tow-haired, and of shiftless manner, taciturn, unless addressed, and he was not believed when he did speak. He was given to mischief and mysterious pretense, was good natured and was never known to laugh. Having learned to read, lives of criminals engrossed his attention, till from study of the Bible he became familiar with portions of the scriptures, and especially found interest in revelation and prophecy. Revivals occurred, and Smith joined a class of probationers in the Methodist Church in Palmyra, but soon withdrew.”

JOSEPH SMITH GETS MARRIED

Joseph Smith, jr., was now a husky young man 22 years of age, six feet tall with uniform proportions and symmetrical outline. He had been carrying on a sort of intermittent correspondence with Emma Hale since he boarded at their home in 1825, and their friendship ripened into real mutual love, and marriage was the result. Joseph divulged his intentions to his folks, some of whom had met Emma, and his plans met with their hearty

approval, and Joseph was soon on his way with a conveyance to bring his soul-mate from Harmony, Pa. They were married January 18, 1827, at South Bainbridge, Chenango County, N. Y. Joseph assisted his father on the farm as usual, and worked for other people at times, when he could be spared.

When September 22, 1827, arrived, Joseph kept his annual appointment with the angel, Moroni, at the Hill Cumorah. On this occasion, after giving Joseph minute instructions as to the manner of procedure in the translation and care of the records, they were entrusted to the custody of Joseph. It appears that someone, who had heard of Joseph's annual visits to the hill, lay in wait for him with the intention of getting possession of them. The angel intimated that enemies would seek to get possession of the sacred record, and warned him to be careful. Joseph being larger in stature, and stronger than his assailant, struck him a heavy blow that knocked him down and stunned him. Joseph then ran through the woods until he came to a large birch tree that had blown down and was quite rotten and hollow. He hurriedly took his pocket-knife and cut through the thick bark, and putting the plates and Urim and Thummim inside the tree, made note of their hiding place, covering the place with limbs and boughs, then proceeded homeward.

On returning home, Joseph told his folks of his experience, and Hyrum was delegated to have a small chest made, of sufficient size to hold the plates and Urim and Thummim. The chest was dove-tailed at the four corners, and fitted with a hasp and padlock. In the meantime Joseph had pried up the hearth-stone in front of the fireplace in the north room, and made an excavation sufficiently large to admit the little chest.

Josiah Stool and Joseph Knight of Broome County, N. Y., happened to be in the neighborhood buying wheat and stayed with the Smiths again. In the meantime, Hyrum Smith had secured a suitable box to keep the gold plates in. Joseph and Emma (his wife) planned to borrow Mr. Stool's horse and buggy and go after the plates early next morning before daylight, to avoid any chance of being spied upon. They stopped at the point in the road nearest to the place Joseph hid the plates, and while Emma held the horse, Joseph took the box and went to where he hid the plates in the birch tree, putting the plates and Urim and Thummim in the box,

after which they returned home. He then lifted up the hearth-stone, put the box in the excavation, then replaced the stone.

As soon as it was rumored about the village that Joseph had some gold plates in his possession, his erstwhile friends lost no time in getting out to the Smith farm, expecting to see and examine them. But when Joseph informed them that they were a sacred charge, and he had received strict instructions not to make public property of them, they were naturally disappointed and friends soon became enemies, and began to ridicule the whole story and brand it as a hoax. But quite frequently two or more would come from the village representing themselves as a committee demanding that they be permitted to see the plates, or, at least, some proof that he had them in his possession. Joseph stretched a curtain enclosing two windows and the fireplace, and during the quiet hours of the day, he would get the plates with the Urim and Thummim out and experiment at translating. It took him some time to learn how, or develop the gift to translate. The characters were on parallel lines, and by experimenting he learned that they had to be translated from right to left.

I quote from "Palmyra History"—"The first depository of the sacred plates was under the heavy hearth-stone of the Smith home. Willard Chase, a carpenter and joiner, was solicited to make a chest wherein to keep the golden book in security, but no payment being anticipated the interview was fruitless. Later a chest was procured, and here Smith consulted the volume upon which no other could gaze and live. William T. Hussey and Ashley Vanduzer, intimates of Smith, resolved to see the book, and were permitted to see its shape and size under a piece of canvass. Smith refused to uncover it, and Hussey, seizing it, stripped off the cover and found a tile brick. Smith claimed to have sold his visitors by a trick and treating them with liquor, the matter was ended, amicably."

The Smith family were harrassed continually. There were prowlers spying at night and it became necessary to keep a night-watchman on duty. One of these spies reported that he had seen very suspicious actions at the coopers-shop which stood near the house, so a committee was appointed to investigate, but on arriving at the Smith homestead, the committee developed into a mob. They wrecked the shop, and not finding the plates, they went to the house and proceeded to tear up the carpets and the floor in

places, and did considerable damage before they could be dissuaded.

Joseph kept the plates about three and a half months at the Smith home, during which time, he did little more than to master the gift and familiarize himself with the characters and their translation. The folks would assemble in their living room of an evening, and he would relate to them what he had learned concerning the ancient peoples of this continent during the day. But the opposition in the community became bold and intolerable, and realizing that he could not proceed with the translation without being molested, he wrote to his father-in-law in Harmony to see if he could arrange to go there to do the translating undisturbed. Mr. Hale wrote that they would be welcome and he would try to make it pleasant for him. He sent his son, Alva, with a team and wagon to bring them to Harmony. Just before they started for Harmony, Martin Harris showed on the scene, and slipped fifty dollars in silver to Joseph in a canvas bag. Joseph mildly remonstrated, offering to accept the money on conditions that Martin would take a note for it, and Alva Hale, Joseph's brother-in-law, who was present, offered to sign with Joseph. But, no! Martin had become interested in Joseph some years before and had even offered financial assistance; so he was very pleased to help him. Moroni told Joseph Smith that the plates contained a history of the everlasting gospel as it was taught by Jesus after his resurrection, to the people on this continent, who were descendants of Father Abraham. They were not to be used for earthly gain. They were a sacred charge and Joseph felt his responsibility, as the angel told him that efforts would be made by wicked men to get them from him. How to safely get the plates and Urim and Thummim to Harmony, Pa., was a problem. He finally decided to put the little box, or chest, with its contents, in one of their new barrels, fill the barrel with red marrow beans, and put a head in the barrel, or, to use the cooper's expression, "head the barrel up."

Up to this time the angel, Moroni, had visited Joseph Smith not less than nine times, during which he had given essential instructions pertaining to the care and translation of the sacred records that had now been entrusted to him. Joseph felt that he had a friend he could lean on for instruction and assistance in time of need.

JOSEPH GOES TO HARMONY, PA.

Joseph, Emma and Alva arrived in Harmony early in December, 1827, where they met with a warm welcome from the Hale family. After a brief rest, they began to make plans for the translation of the plates. Two upstairs rooms were to be used by Joseph and Emma, one for sleeping and one for translating purposes, and they were to eat their meals with the family. This arrangement was changed later, when Joseph purchased thirteen and one-half acres of land with a small house, from his father-in-law, which became their official home until they went to Kirtland in 1831. The land was sold June 28, 1833, to Joseph McKune, jr., of Harmony Township, Susquehanna County, Pa.

In February Martin arranged his affairs at home so it was possible for him to get away to investigate further the thing that was now uppermost in his mind, viz: the claims of Joseph Smith to new revelation. Martin was a man forty-five years of age, whereas Joseph Smith was little more than a youth, being then in his 23rd year. Martin's family and friends made strenuous efforts to poison his mind against Joseph Smith, but to no avail. I quote from "Palmyra History"—"Martin Harris was a well-to-do farmer living a mile and a half north of the village, and proverbially an honest, peaceful man. And how to reconcile the act of Harris in signing his name as one of three witnesses to the Golden Bible, in view of the character of honesty, which had always been conceded him, could never be easily explained. His friends tried to dissuade him from the course of abetting Joe Smith, but to no avail."

MARTIN HARRIS TAKES CHARACTERS TO NEW YORK

Martin arrived in Harmony about the middle of February with the determination to make further investigation and learn for himself. In the meantime Joseph had transcribed some of the characters onto paper, with their translation. When Martin saw these, he asked permission to take the characters with their translations to New York and show them to some of the great educators and get their opinion as to their genuineness. He first approached Dr. Mitchell, a man of high learning and acquainted with the dead languages. But he sent Martin to Professor Charles Anthon, who was authority on ancient writings and hieroglyphics, giving him a note to Professor Anthon, requesting him to carefully examine them. Professor Anthon pronounced the characters

Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac and Arabic, and that the characters were genuine, and wrote out a certificate to that effect and handed it to Martin to show the people of Palmyra. As Martin was starting for the door, Professor Anthon called him back and asked him how the young man (Joseph Smith) happened to find the record. And when Martin explained that they were delivered to him by an angel, Professor Anthon said, "Let me take that paper." And when Martin handed it to him, he tore it in pieces saying, "There is no such thing as ministering of angels in these days."

But Martin came back to Harmony and reported to Joseph Smith. In talking over plans, it was decided that Martin should go to Palmyra and arrange his affairs so he could return to Harmony and act as scribe while Joseph translated the characters by means of the "interpreters," or Urim and Thummim. I quote from "History of the Church"—"The Urim and Thummim consisted of two precious stones set in an arch of silver which was fastened to an ancient breast-plate of pure gold, curiously wrought. *** Four golden bands were fastened to it, for the purpose of attaching it to the person of the wearer—two of the bands being for the shoulders, the other two for the hips. When properly adjusted on the person who had the gift of translation, the stones became transparent, and when focused on the characters, the translation would be revealed to the translator. The plates, also of gold, were uniform in thickness, not quite as thick as common tin, and were about eight inches in length by seven wide, bound together in book form by three rings. The plates were covered on both sides with strange characters, small and beautifully engraved."

Martin returned from Palmyra on the twelfth of April, 1828. They curtained off the east end of an upstairs room, including a window, and began the translation. Martin's heart was thrilled as he sat writing the words that fell from Joseph's lips as the latter translated "by the gift and power of God." The first plates contained the writings of Lehi, one of the minor prophets, who dwelt at Jerusalem. Lehi, being warned of God that Jerusalem was to be destroyed, led a colony into the wilderness and finally across the "great waters" to this continent, landing on the west coast of South America, possibly in northern Chile.

They had now been writing, with but little interruption, for

about a month, during which time Martin had repeatedly remarked how nice it would be, if his folks could see what they were doing, feeling assured that their prejudices and opposition would "melt away like dew before the morning sun." And now that they had come to a stopping place, having finished the writings of the first scribe, which amounted to 116 pages of fools-cap paper, he pleaded with Joseph to inquire of the Lord through the Urim and Thummim, if it would be all right for him to take the manuscript to Palmyra and read it to his folks. Joseph made inquiry but received a negative reply. But Martin had become so enthused with the work, that he was anxious to share it with his folks, and having thought of new excuses for wanting his folks to read the manuscript, arguing that he had taken some to Professor Anthon and returned them, pleaded with Joseph to make further inquiry, but the reply was the same. So positive did Martin feel about the matter, and so insistent did he become, that, feeling obligated to Martin because of the assistance, financial and otherwise, Martin had rendered, Joseph finally was persuaded against his better judgment to let him take the manuscript and read it to five persons Martin seemed to be particularly interested in, specifically mentioned as follows: His father and mother, his wife and her sister, Mrs. Cobb, and his brother, Preserved Harris.

MANUSCRIPT STOLEN

Arriving at Palmyra Martin greeted his old friends, and incidentally told them about his experiences in going to New York with characters provided by Joseph Smith and of his meeting with Dr. Mitchell and Professor Anthon. He also told them that Joseph Smith was translating the gold plates and that he, Martin, had been writing it down as Joseph dictated to him. He made an appointment with the members of his family mentioned in his agreement with Joseph, but when the time arrived, there were others present, but as they were either relatives or good friends, he could see no harm in letting them hear the manuscript read. And once his pledge was broken, it became easier to break it again. His brother, Preserved Harris, and one or two others, were favorably impressed with his story and the contents of the manuscript, but others were skeptical and asked him many questions concerning the plates and Urim and Thummim, and when he told them that he had not seen them, hence could not

describe them, they lost interest, branding the whole thing as a huge fraud, that "Joe Smith was making it up as he went along, etc." His wife became more bitter and made it very uncomfortable for Martin. Finally, one day when a very dear friend dropped in to talk with him, he went to his room to get the manuscript to read it to his friend and unlocked the drawer where he had kept it. It was gone! Martin was now in a perplexing predicament. He searched every drawer, closet and nook and corner but without results. He worked himself into a frenzy, and when his wife returned home, she professed total ignorance as to their whereabouts. What should he do, return to Harmony without them and explain everything to Joseph and ask his forgiveness, or write him a letter explaining all? But in the meantime, Joseph had forebodings that caused him not a little worry. His misgivings got to such a pitch that he started for Palmyra to see what was keeping Martin. It was a sad meeting. Martin, old enough to be Joseph's father, humbly admitted that he had broken his pledge, and that the manuscript had been stolen from him.

The manuscript mysteriously disappeared and was never found. There is a local story, or tradition, which runs as follows: When Joseph arrived from Harmony, Pa., he proceeded to the Harris farm on the following day, just as they were about to sit down for the noonday meal, and Joseph was asked to dine with them. During the course of the meal, the disappearance of the manuscript was brought up, and during the conversation something was said that piqued Mrs. Harris, who got up from the table quietly, went out the kitchen door and around to the front door, went upstairs into a bed-room where she had them hidden, put them in her apron, took them downstairs, walked into the north room and dumped them into the fireplace and burned them up. But as there is nothing in authentic history to corroborate the story, and as Mother Smith, in relating the incident, in her book, says that Joseph did not go to the Harris farm, but that Martin came to the Smith farm, the above story should at least be taken with a large question mark after it.

PLATES TAKEN FROM MARTIN

Because of Joseph's dereliction in following counsel, and Martin's perfidy, Joseph lost the power to translate for a season, and the plates and the Urim and Thummim were taken from him

by the angel, Moroni, and were not returned to him until he had humbled himself and thoroughly repented. The Urim and Thummim was returned to him in July, 1828, by means of which he received a revelation relative to the missing manuscript, listed in the Doctrine and Covenants as Sec. 3. The plates were returned to him the latter part of August or early in September, 1828, immediately after which he received the revelation, listed as Sec. 10.

It was during this year that Joseph purchased thirteen and a half acres of land from his father-in-law, Isaac Hale, and built a small house on it. He not only raised a crop on this land this year, but assisted Mr. Hale with his work. His father came down from Palmyra on a visit during the fall. It was during November of this year that Oliver Cowdery, a young school-master, canvassed the vicinity of the Smith home in Manchester, to get up a subscription school, the same to continue for sixteen weeks. The little log school-house was nearly a mile from the Smith home, on the old "plank road," where the "little red" cobble-rock Armington school now stands. It was customary for the teacher to board for short periods with the different patrons of the school. Oliver Cowdery came to board with the Smith family during the month of March, 1829. He was favorably impressed with the Smith family, and as he had heard much floating gossip concerning them, especially Joseph, he naturally grew inquisitive and began to draw out the particulars concerning Joseph's visions, etc. And as Joseph Smith, sr., had but recently returned from a visit to Harmony, he was in a position to tell him all the latest developments. Incidentally, he told him that Joseph was unable to proceed with the translation until he could find a suitable person to write for him. This struck Oliver very forcibly, and the thought came to him that he might be of service to Joseph. He not only thought about it but prayed about it. Here I quote Cowdery—"One night after retiring to my bed, I called upon the Lord to know if these things were true, and the Lord manifested unto me that they were true, but I kept the entire circumstance a secret until after meeting Joseph in Harmony."

Oliver now became exceedingly anxious and could scarcely wait until his school closed the last week in March so he could go and have a personal talk with Joseph. He started about April 2nd,

going via Fayette, Seneca County, staying one day with the Peter Whitmer family, with whom he had previously boarded while teaching in that neighborhood. The Whitmer family had heard exaggerated rumors concerning the Smith family, and were naturally prejudiced, but after listening to Oliver's recital of what he had learned at the Smith home, they also became interested and made a special request that Oliver Cowdery write them as to his impressions, after he contacted Joseph Smith, and keep them posted on all new developments.

In the meantime Joseph had sought the Lord in fervent prayer to direct him in selecting a suitable man to assist him with the translating of the sacred record that had been entrusted to him, and when Oliver showed on the scene April 5th, 1829, he took it as an answer to his prayers. They greeted each other warmly, even as two men who might have met before. Oliver fitted into the vacant niche beautifully, and two days after his arrival, they began the translation, Joseph interpreting with the Urim and Thummim and Oliver writing the words down as they fell from Joseph's lips. Oliver was thrilled with his work, and that evening wrote enthusiastically to the Whitmers saying that he was fully convinced that it was all that it had been represented to be, and that God had again revealed Himself to the children of men.

Joseph's home was about two hundred yards from the banks of the Susquehanna River, and it was customary for Joseph and Oliver, during their work of translating, to repair daily to a thicket by the river, to offer up their devotions to their Heavenly Father, asking for divine guidance in their work. While translating the second record of Nephi, they came across the following words: (Speaking of Christ) "And He commandeth all men that they must repent, and be baptized in His name, having perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel, or they cannot be saved in the Kingdom of God. And if they will not repent and believe in His name, and endure to the end, they must be damned: for the Lord God hath spoken it."

AARONIC PRIESTHOOD RESTORED

Up to this time, Joseph Smith had conversed with heavenly messengers about a dozen times, and had received the gift to translate and received revelations by means of the Urim and

Thummim, but had not received, neither had he assumed, the authority to officiate in any of the holy ordinances of the gospel. But this language seemed to be so positive on the essentiality of baptism, and, as Joseph and Oliver had not been baptized, they felt a strong urge to offer up a special petition to God on the subject, and accordingly walked down to their place of secret prayer on the riverbank. As they knelt down and began to pray, Joseph being mouth, they were soon surrounded by a cloud of light and in the midst of the light stood an angelic messenger announcing himself as "John, the same that is called John the Baptist," and laying his hands upon their heads said, "Upon you, my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again, an offering unto the Lord in righteousness."

Quote Joseph: "He instructed us to baptize each other and ordain each other to the Aaronic Priesthood. Accordingly, we at once repaired to the river, where I baptized Oliver, and in turn he baptized me, after which, I laid my hands on Oliver's head and ordained him to the Aaronic Priesthood, and in a similar manner he conferred the priesthood upon me. The angel also told us that he was acting under the direction of Peter, James and John, who would restore the keys of the higher or Melchisedek Priesthood upon us at some future time."

This vision and restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood took place on May 15, 1829, on the banks of the Susquehanna River, in Harmony, Pennsylvania.

This was a new experience to Oliver Cowdery, and I shall quote briefly from his rather lengthy recital of the incident: "On a sudden, as from the midst of eternity, the voice of the Redeemer spake peace unto us, while the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the gospel of repentance. What joy! what wonder! what amazement! While the world was wracked and distracted, while millions were groping as the blind for the wall, and while all men were resting upon uncertainty, as a general mass, our eyes beheld—our ears heard—as in the 'blaze

of day'—yes, more—above the glitter of the May sunbeam, which then shed its brilliancy over the face of nature! Then his voice, though mild, pierced to the center, and his words, 'I am thy fellow servant,' dispelled every fear. We listened, we gazed, we admired! 'Twas the voice of the angel from glory—'Twas a message from the Most High, and as we heard, we rejoiced, while His love enkindled upon our souls, and we were rapt in the vision of the Almighty."

After being baptized their minds seemed to be illuminated and the scriptures were opened to their understandings as never before. Mysterious passages were made plain, and they felt it their duty to explain the gospel principles to visitors from time to time. As a result opposition sprung up in the neighborhood, but Joseph's father-in-law promised them protection as far as it was in his power to do so.

About this time Joseph's brother, Samuel H. Smith, came to visit them. They let him read the translation of the plates as far as they had gone and also told him of the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood and their baptism. After due meditation and secret prayer out in the woods near the river, Samuel requested baptism, and Oliver baptized him. A few days later Peter Whitmer came from Fayette, N. Y., on a brief visit to get some first hand information as to what they were doing. He returned home much impressed. A few days later Joseph's brother, Hyrum, came from Palmyra on a short visit and became keenly interested in that portion of the manuscript that had thus far been written. He returned home happy. It was about this time that Joseph Knight of Colesville, who had visited the Smiths at Palmyra, paid them a visit to ascertain the nature of the work Joseph and Oliver were engaged in. Before leaving his home, he filled up his buggy with fruit and vegetables to "help a good cause," as he expressed it. A very warm friendship grew up between Joseph and the old gentleman, which led to frequent visits to the Knight home, just over the line in Broome County, N. Y. It was probably while returning from one of these visits the latter part of May, "in the wilderness between Harmony, Pa., and Colesville, N. Y., on the Susquehanna River," that the Melchisedek Priesthood, and keys of the Apostleship, was conferred upon Joseph and Oliver, by Peter, James and John. In relating the incident Oliver Cowdery,

says, "I was also present with Joseph when the higher or Melchisedek Priesthood was conferred by the holy angels from on high."

By this time, about the first of June, considerable opposition began to develop. Malicious, floating neighborhood gossip, and even persecution began to show its ugly head. Some of the accusations, made under oath, are so ridiculous and impossible, that I shall not waste space by inserting any of them. When it became unbearable, Oliver wrote to Peter Whitmer at Fayette, N. Y., and asked if they could make arrangements to go there to resume the translation.

JOSEPH AND MARTIN MOVE TO FAYETTE, N. Y.

A few days later, David Whitmer arrived with a team and wagon, and took Joseph and Oliver to the Peter Whitmer farm in the town of Fayette, Seneca County, N. Y. Here they met with a hearty welcome by the Whitmer family, and a few of their neighbors who had heard about Joseph Smith, and were anxious to know concerning the translation of the plates. An upper room in the northeast corner of the home was turned over to them to be used for translating, where they would be unmolested in their work.

While living at Harmony, Joseph Smith received ten revelations through the Urim and Thummim, received the Aaronic and Melchisedek Priesthoods, at the hands of heavenly messengers, and was visited a number of times by the angel, Moroni, who gave him extensive instruction pertaining to the translation of the records containing the history of ancient America. Before beginning their journey to Fayette, N. Y., by special arrangement, the angel, Moroni, took possession of the small chest containing the plates and Urim and Thummim, and delivered them the morning after their arrival at the Whitmer home. Peter Whitmer is mentioned as a well-to-do Dutch farmer. Their first home was a log house, to which was added, two years later, a lean-to along the north side. In 1826, they built a new eight-room house of the colonial type. Both houses were standing when Joseph and Oliver were there. They were assigned to a light, cheerful room on the second floor, in the northeast corner of the new building, referred

to in history as “the upper chamber in the Peter Whitmer home.” The farm consists of 100 acres of land, all tillable.

During their work of translation, they found a number of references to special witnesses—men, who had assisted in bringing forth the work, who would be permitted to behold the plates and Urim and Thummim, that they might bear witness, along with Joseph Smith, to the divinity of the work. I here quote from the Book of Mormon, Ether, fifth chapter, verses 3 to 6—“And behold, ye may show the plates unto those who shall assist in bringing forth this work: and unto three shall they be shown by the power of God: wherefore, they shall know of a surety that these things are true. And in the mouth of three witnesses, shall these things be established. *** of which the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost bear record—and all this shall stand as a testimony against the world at the last day. And if it so be, that they repent and come unto the Father in the name of Jesus, they shall be received into the kingdom of God.”

Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer had been most active in bringing forth the work, sacrificing both time and means. Accordingly, Joseph wrote to Martin Harris, who was at Palmyra, requesting him to come to the Whitmer home in Fayette, to talk over things of importance. In a few days Martin arrived, bringing with him Joseph’s father and mother. This was a very joyful occasion. That evening they talked over the responsibility that would rest upon them in bearing their testimony to the world in connection with Joseph, to the divinity of the work, and each man expressed himself as being elated over the prospect of sharing this divine knowledge and the responsibility that would naturally follow.

THREE SPECIAL WITNESSES

On retiring to his room, Joseph humbly knelt in earnest supplication, asking the Lord to approve of his selection of these men who had contributed so much in bringing forth the work in which he was engaged. In answer to his prayer, Moroni was sent to give instructions and arrange for the presentation of the plates before the three special witnesses. When the angel made his departure, he took with him the plates and the Urim and Thummim. Whether or not the eligibility of Martin Harris was

questioned, we are not informed, but the next morning, after singing some hymns, reading a chapter from the Bible and offering a prayer, the four men repaired to the grove on the northeast part of the farm. On the way to the woods, Joseph addressed Martin as follows: "Martin, you will have to humble yourself before God this morning as you have never done before, that you may obtain a forgiveness of your sins. If you will do this, it is the Lord's will that you should look upon the plates and Urim and Thummim along with Oliver and David."

This was evidently taken by Martin as a rebuke, and he felt piqued. After reaching a secluded spot in the woods, they knelt in a circle, and each man prayed in turn, beginning with Joseph, but there was no response. They prayed again in the same order as before, and yet there was no response. Joseph was noticeably worried. At this point Martin asked for the privilege of retiring, saying that he was out of harmony. His request was granted, after which, the three remaining men knelt as before and as the last man said "Amen!" the vision burst upon them. I here quote David Whitmer: "As the last man said, 'Amen!' the angel, Moroni, stood before us surrounded by a brilliant light behind a table, and on the table were the plates, Urim and Thummim, the sword of Laban that was brought from Jerusalem, and the Liahona. The angel turned the plates as you would leaves of a book, saying: 'These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the gift and power of God. The translation which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you have seen and heard.' "

Immediately after this glorious vision, Joseph went in search of Martin Harris, who had previously withdrawn from them, and found him in another part of the grove praying. When Joseph approached, Martin was weeping bitterly and pleaded with Joseph to pray with him and ask God to forgive him of his imperfections. Joseph did so and at the conclusion of his prayer, the same vision was opened up to their view. Martin rejoiced exceedingly and exclaimed, "'Tis enough! 'tis enough! Mine eyes have beheld! Mine eyes have beheld!" From this time on, all doubt was banished from Martin's mind. He never denied his testimony. The solemn testimony of these three men goes forth with every Book of Mormon that comes off the press.

BOOK OF MORMON COPYRIGHT

As the translation of the plates neared completion, Joseph sent the title page to R. R. Lansing, chief clerk of the Northern District of New York, and obtained the copyright for the Book of Mormon. This was on June 11, 1829. Soon after this, June 26, 1829, the following article appeared in "The Wayne Sentinel," which, so far as is known, is the first publicity given the "Book of Mormon."—"Just about this particular region, for some time past, much speculation has existed concerning a pretended discovery, through superhuman means, of an ancient record, of a religious and divine origin, written in ancient characters, impossible to be interpreted by any to whom the special gift has not been imparted by inspiration. It is generally known and spoken of as the 'Golden Bible.' Most people entertain an idea that the whole matter is the result of gross imposition and a grosser superstition. It is pretended that it will be published as soon as the translation is completed. Meanwhile we have been furnished with the following which is represented to us as intended for the title page of the work. We give it as a curiosity:

"The Book of Mormon, an account written by the hand of Mormon upon plates taken from the plates of Nephi: Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the records of the people of Nephi and also of the Lamanites, (Indians) written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile, written by way of commandment and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation, written and sealed and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed—to come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof, sealed up by the hand of Moroni and hid up unto the Lord to come forth in due time by way of Gentile—the interpretation thereof by the gift of God; also an abridgment taken from the book of Ether, which is a record of the people of Jared, who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven, *** and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting unto all nations. And now, if there be faults, they be the mistakes of men; wherefore condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment seat of Christ."

News that Joseph Smith was at the Whitmer home trans-

lating ancient records soon spread throughout the surrounding country, and many visitors called to see what it was all about. Some came to investigate and gather the facts, while others came through curiosity, all hoping that they would be permitted to examine the plates, that had been represented as being "covered all over with hieroglyphics." Needless to say that when they were disappointed in their desires, much idle gossip and ridicule followed. I quote briefly from the "History of Waterloo," a village three miles from the Whitmer farm—"To outsiders, especially residents of Waterloo, where Smith was an occasional visitor, and which was but a small village, (1829)) 'Mormon Joe,' as he was generally called, occasioned no end of fun and comment. He was often seen in the outskirts of the village, by people now living, who say that it was his custom to pace slowly along some favorite walk with his hat in his hand, crown downward, steadily gazing into it. This led his scoffers to say that he was communing with the spirits (maggots), that infest unclean heads."

EIGHT WITNESSES VIEW THE PLATES

During the brief visit of Joseph's father and mother at the Whitmer home, they observed that considerable opposition had arisen there, even as it did at Harmony, Pennsylvania. They informed Joseph and Oliver that the opposition had subsided at Palmyra, and, in case they thought it advisable to finish the translation at the old home, they would not be disturbed. We are not told whether or not they finished the translation at the Whitmer home or at the Smith home, but I am quite inclined to believe that it was finished at the Smith home. At any rate, after the translation was finished, four of the Whitmers came to the Smith home in Manchester, picking up Hiram Page enroute, who was then living at Phelps. They talked over plans for the publication of the manuscript, and discussed other matters. Whether it was by request of Joseph we are not informed, suffice it to say, it was on this occasion that the four Whitmers, Hiram Page and three members of the Smith family saw and examined the plates. I quote from Mother Smith's book—"Soon after they came, all the male members of the company, with my husband, Samuel and Hyrum, retired to a place in the woods where the family were in the habit of offering up their secret devotions to God. *** Here

it was that those eight witnesses, *** looked upon them (the plates) and handled them." These eight men examined the volume of gold plates, and gave rather a minute description of the plates and the beautifully engraved ancient characters on them. The plates were entrusted to Joseph by their custodian, Moroni, to exhibit to the eight witnesses on this occasion.

The angel, Moroni, instructed Joseph to return the plates to the Hill Cumorah. He naturally supposed that the angel would meet him there and take possession of them; but Joseph informs us that, when he "approached the hill from a bridle trail through the woods," it seemed that the hill opened up and he walked into a room in which there was a table, probably the same table that the three witnesses saw in the vision in the grove on the Whitmer farm. This room contained a vast collection of Jaredite and Nephite records. On the table were the Liahona and the sword of Laban. Joseph placed the gold plates and Urim and Thummim on the table and then returned home. Mormon says: "I hid up in the Hill Cumorah all the records which had been entrusted to me by the hand of the Lord, save it were these few plates which I gave unto my Son, Moroni." (Mormon 6:6) And these few plates which Mormon gave unto his son, Moroni, were entrusted to Joseph Smith on September 22, 1827, and, in turn, Joseph Smith placed them with the vast accumulation of plates deposited in the Hill Cumorah about 285 years A. D., by Mormon, the great Nephite prophet-general.

After the translation of the records was finished, Oliver Cowdery copied the entire manuscript so that they would have a copy for themselves in case that any portion should be lost or stolen, as was the case with the first 116 pages translated and entrusted to Martin Harris to bring to Palmyra from Harmony, to read to his family, hoping to thus allay their prejudice toward himself and Joseph Smith, but these, as I said before, were stolen from him, causing him much anxiety and grief. We do not know how long it took Oliver Cowdery to copy the manuscript, but during the month of August we find Joseph and Martin interviewing people concerning the publication of the book. They first called on E. B. Grandin of Palmyra, manager and principal owner of the Wayne Sentinel, a small paper published in Palmyra. But he hesitated, saying that he was poorly equipped to undertake a

binding job of that size, and suggested that they call on Thurlow Weed, publisher of the Anti-Masonic Inquirer at Rochester. Mr. Weed was approached by Joseph and Martin, and shown some of the manuscript. He looked it over briefly, and observing that it was neither capitalized nor punctuated and observing many new names he had never seen nor heard of before, he made some inquiry as to where they got it, and after listening to their story, which seemed so impossible and inconsistent, he handed the manuscript back remarking that he didn't want to get mixed up with anything so spooky and mysterious. Later in his writings in referring to this incident, he says, "And thus I lost the opportunity of having my name go down in history connected with Joe Smith and the Mormons."

CONTRACT LET FOR PRINTING BOOK OF MORMON

They next called on Elihu F. Marshall of Rochester, who was equipped to both print and bind books, but his prices were so prohibitive that they decided to return home. They finally called on Mr. Grandin again and prevailed on him to take the job. On August 25, 1829, a contract was signed whereby Mr. Grandin was to print and bind 5,000 copies for the sum of \$3,000.00. Martin Harris went security for the amount by mortgaging his home to Mr. Grandin to guarantee the payment of the \$3,000.00. The mortgage was for the duration of eighteen months.

After the contract was signed for the printing of the Book of Mormon, Joseph returned to his home in Harmony, while Hyrum and Oliver took the responsibility of getting the printing done. It was written on fools-cap paper in solid block form without capitalization or punctuation. Joseph translated by means of the Urim and Thummim, Oliver writing as the words fell from Joseph's lips. Oliver did not stop to study out proper names or put in the necessary diacritical marks, which made extra work for the printer, making the work of setting the type slow and tedious. Hyrum and Oliver would take just enough manuscript in each morning to keep John H. Gilbert, who set most of the type, busy during the day, then bring it back with them of an evening. Gilbert finally prevailed on them bringing in a quire of 48 pages at a time so he could take it home evenings and do his marking at home.

I quote from an interview with Mr. Gilbert by a Detroit Post

and Tribune reporter—"Major John H. Gilbert, of Palmyra, N. Y., is in the city on a visit to his son, Charles T. Gilbert of Nevins and Mills. He is a printer, was formerly proprietor of the Wayne Sentinel, and is the man who set up the Mormon Bible from the original manuscript.

"It was the custom of the printer as the sheets were run through the press to take one of each form for preservation. Major Gilbert did this and now has with him in the city, the unbound sheets of the Mormon Bible, as he took them from the press. These he cheerfully exhibits to any person having a curiosity to look at them. The book was a quarto of 580 pages. The contents are subdivided into chapters, broken into frequent paragraphs, but the verses are not numbered, as they are in later editions.

"Upon the title page appears the name of Joseph Smith, 'Author and Proprietor.' In all subsequent editions he appears simply as 'Translator.' This change was rendered necessary to carry out the theory, afterwards adopted, that Smith dug up these writings, and translated them from 'reformed Egyptian' by means of a pair of super-natural spectacles.

PRINTER INTERVIEWED

"A reporter from the Post-Tribune met Major Gilbert on Saturday and had a very pleasant talk with him about the early days of 'Mormonism' in Wayne County, N. Y., in which the modern religion started. He found the veteran printer seventy-five years of age.

"One pleasant day in the summer of 1829, Hyrum Smith came to the office to negotiate for the printing of a book. The arrangements were completed whereby 5,000 copies of the book were to be printed for \$3,000.00. A well-to-do farmer named Martin Harris, living in the neighborhood agreed to become security for the payment of the money, and the work was at once put in hand. Major Gilbert set all the type of the book except some 20 or 30 pages, and did nearly all the press work.

"The copy was brought to the office by Hyrum Smith and Oliver Cowdery. It was written on fools-cap paper in a good clear hand—the hand writing was Oliver Cowdery's—and there was not a punctuation mark in the whole manuscript. The sentences were

all run in without capitals or other mark to designate where one left off and another began, and it was no easy task to straighten out the stuff. *** At first Smith used to come to the office every morning with just enough manuscript to last through the day, but it was so much bother to put in the punctuation that Gilbert said, 'Bring me around a quantity of copy at a time and I can go through it and fix it up evenings, and so get along faster with it.' Smith replied, 'This is pretty important business, young man, and I don't know that we can trust this manuscript in your possession.'

"Finally his scruples were overcome, and he consented to the arrangement, and then he would bring around a quire of forty-eight pages at a time, and this would last several days, and when the matter had been set, all the copy was taken away by Smith.

"It took eight months to set up the book and run it through the press. Major Gilbert was not much interested in the book, saying that it was rather prosaic, and to this day never thought it worthwhile to read it a second time. There were nine children in the Smith family. Joe was then about twenty-three years of age. He was a lazy good-for-nothing lout, chiefly noted for his capacity to hang around a corner grocery store and punish poor whiskey. *** The dealings with the outside world, in respect to it, were manipulated by Hyrum Smith, an elder brother of Joe's. Major Gilbert's recollection of all those persons is fresh and vivid, and he has a fund of anecdotes and incidents relating to them."

It soon became apparent that Hyrum Smith's apprehensions were justified, for no sooner did Mr. Gilbert begin taking a quire of the manuscript home with him, than one Obadiah Dogberry appeared on the scene with evil intent. Mr. Dogberry published a small weekly paper called "The Reflector." The following is his own introduction: "THE REFLECTOR, printed and published weekly by Obadiah Dogberry, Jun., editor and proprietor, at the 'Bower on Winter Green Hill,' to whom communications must be addressed through the P. O."

DOGBERRY'S VENOMOUS ATTACK

Professor McIntosh, in referring to this paper, later says, "The paper was given over to science, amusement and ironical castigation." Whether or not Mr. Gilbert connived with Dogberry we are not informed. At any rate, Mr. Dogberry began to vent

some of his "ironical castigation" on the "Gold Bible," as he termed it, by slurring jibes, and stealing (copying) subject matter and publishing it in his own contemptible paper. I shall quote a few "hot shots" from the Dogberry paper. September 2, 1829—"The Gold Bible by Joseph Smith, Jun., author and proprietor, is now in the press and shortly will appear. Priestcraft is short lived." September 9—"The Book of Mormon is expected to be ready for delivery in course of one year—Great and marvelous things will 'come to pass' about those days. The numbers of the Gold Bible Apostles is said to be complete. Joe Smith, Jun., is about to assign to each, a mission to the heathen."

December 9, 1829—"GOLD BIBLE. A work bearing this cognomen is now in the press. As much curiosity has been excited in this section of the country on the subject, and as the work itself will not be ready for delivery for some months to come, at a solicitation of many of our readers we have concluded to commence publishing extracts from it on or before the commencement of our next series."

The issue of January 2, 1830, contained a chapter from First Book of Nephi, which was the first of a series taken from First and Second Nephi, and the Book of Alma. When these articles began to appear in the Dogberry paper, Hyrum Smith and Oliver Cowdery, who had charge of the printing of the book, earnestly protested against him publishing the manuscript, but Dogberry defied them and abused them, using vile language and dared them to fight. As they had no legal authority to stop him from publishing the manuscript, it became necessary to send to Harmony, Pa., for Joseph Smith, Jr., who held the copyright, to come to Palmyra and officially injunction Dogberry from publishing it. In the meantime, Dogberry continued his articles. I quote from his paper January 2nd—"We do not intend at this time to discuss the merits or demerits of this work, and feel astonished that some of our neighbors, who profess liberal principles, and are quite as ignorant on the subject as we are, should give themselves quite so much uneasiness about matters that so little concern them. THE BOOK, when it shall come before the public, must stand or fall, according to the whims and fancies of its readers. How it will stand the test of rigid criticism, we are not prepared to say, not having as yet examined many of its pages. We are, however,

prepared to state, that from a part of the first chapter now before us, and which we this day publish, we cannot discover anything treasonable, or which will have a tendency to subvert our liberties. As to its religious character, we have, as yet no means of determining, and if we had, we would be quite loath to meddle with the tender consciences of our readers.”

Also from the next edition—“We inadvertently neglected in our remarks last week, respecting this wonderful work, to accompany them with the explanations requisite to a correct understanding of it. The allellation ‘Gold Bible’ is only a cant cognomen that has been given it by the unbelievers, for, be it known, the book, as well as the sacred volume (Bible) which is held so valuable by all good Christians, is not without its revilers and unbelievers, by way of derision. The true title of the work, it appears, from the copyright, is the ‘Book of Mormon’ comprising a great number of books, or parts, by different primary authors, all of which are divided into chapters. The first is “The First Book of Nephi,” of which we gave an extract in our last, and is continued in the present number of our paper. The whole purports to be a compilation in ancient hieroglyphics on plates of gold by one chosen of the lost tribes, whose name was MORMON.”

JOSEPH SMITH SERVES INJUNCTION

After Joseph Smith arrived from Harmony, Pa., and officially injunctioned Dogberry from printing the Book of Mormon contents, he became more venomous in his attacks on the “Gold Bible” and the Smith family. I quote briefly from his paper, April 19, 1830—“Please advise Hyrum Smith, and some of his ill-bred associates, not to be quite so impertinent, when decent folks denounce the imposition of the ‘Gold Bible.’ The anathemas of such ignorant wretches, altho not feared, are not quite so well relished by some people. Apostles should keep cool.” Again—“Now the rest of the acts of the magician, how his mantle fell upon the prophet Joe Smith, Jun., and how he made a league with the spirit who afterwards turned out to be an angel, and how he obtained the ‘Gold Bible’ spectacles, and breast-plate—will they not be faithfully recorded in the book Punki?”

Dogberry continued with his vitriolic darts, during the brief existence of his paper, ending his tirade against Joseph Smith and

the Book of Mormon, with six special articles which are too lengthy to use in this series of articles. Suffice it to say that although Dogberry had a decidedly unsavory reputation in the community, yet I am inclined to believe that, as a result of his continuous attacks in practically every issue of his paper over the period of a year, the people of the community were unconsciously influenced against the Smith family and the Book of Mormon before it came off the press. At any rate, churches, civic and other village organizations, passed resolutions against buying the book or even accepting it as a gift. It was not only boycotted but condemned, tried and sentenced by the sentiment of the villagers before it was born.

On March 19, 1830, the following notice appeared in the "Wayne Sentinel:" "We are requested to announce that the 'Book of Mormon' will be ready for sale in the course of next week." The following week, March 26th, under the heading, "THE BOOK OF MORMON," was published the title page of the Book of Mormon, followed by the announcement: "The above work, containing about 600 pages, large duodecimo, is now for sale, wholesale and retail, at the Palmyra Bookstore, by E. B. Grandin."

MARTIN HARRIS MORTGAGES FARM

Martin Harris mortgaged his two hundred forty acre farm to E. B. Grandin for \$3,000.00 to guarantee payment for printing 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon, expecting that the book would find ready sale, and that he would have no trouble in paying off the mortgage, which would fall due in eighteen months. But owing to the boycott placed on the book, it became necessary to sell one hundred fifty acres to meet the mortgage. I quote from "Wayne Sentinel"—"Harris, having separated from his wife on account of his halucinations, the property, one of the best in town, was divided, by eighty acres being deeded to his wife, and Harris retaining about two hundred forty acres, and upon this portion only was the mortgage given. One hundred fifty acres of this farm was sold at private sale in 1831, to Thomas Lakey to pay off the mortgage."

AGREEMENT

"Articles of agreement made and concluded this first day of April, in the year 1831, between Martin Harris of the first part, and Thomas Lakey of the second part, both of Palmyra, in the

County of Wayne, and the State of New York, in the manner and form following:

“The said Martin Harris, for the consideration hereinafter mentioned, agrees to sell to the said Thomas Lakey the farm on which he now resides, containing by estimation, one hundred and fifty acres, for the sum of twenty dollars for each acre, and, forthwith to obtain a correct survey of said premises, and give a good warranty deed of same, and give immediate possession of everything. Always excepting and reserving the privilege of living in the house till the first of May next. The said Thomas Lakey is to have all the wheat on the ground except ten acres sown by Mr. Dyke, and the one-half of the said ten acres shall belong to the said Thomas Lakey after the said Dyke shall harvest the same and shock it up in the field.

“In consideration whereof, the said Thomas Lakey agrees to pay to the said Martin Harris, one third of the purchase money on the first day of next May, and one third in the month of October next, and the remaining one third in the month of October in the year eighteen hundred and thirty-two. In consideration whereof the parties bind themselves in the penal sum of five hundred dollars, being damages assessed and agreed upon by the parties. In witness whereof, the parties have hereunto interchangeably set their hands and seals, the day and year first above written.”

(Signed)

MARTIN HARRIS, L. S.

THOMAS LAKEY, L. S.

The last pages of the Book of Mormon came off the press March 23, 1830, and the book was placed on sale. Up to this time a number of people, who had faith in Joseph Smith as a prophet, had requested baptism, and as baptism, from the beginning of the Church, has been looked upon as a symbol of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the repentant candidate becoming dead to sin, being buried in the watery grave and raised unto a newness of life freed from sin, it became necessary to find water enough to immerse the candidates. Accordingly some of the converts from the vicinity of Palmyra were baptized in Crooked Brook, a stream that runs through the Smith farm, at a point where a dam had been put in for the purpose of getting power to run a small saw-mill. Others were baptized in Thomas Creek

near the Whitmer farm in Fayette, N. Y., and still others in Seneca Lake about four miles from the Whitmer farm. Among the early converts from Palmyra were: Oliver Cowdery, Samuel Lawrence, Martin Harris, Preserved Harris, Peter Ingersoll, Charles Ford, George and Dolly Proper; From Macedon: Ziba Peterson and Calvin Stoddard and wife; From Brighton: Ezra Thayer; From Pultneyville: Lee Walters; From Phelps: Hiram Page; From Manchester: Orin P. Rockwell and wife Caroline, Gad Stafford and his brother, and members of the Smith family. About twenty people had been baptized, when word was quietly passed around inviting those who had been baptized, and others, who were in sympathy with the movement, to meet at the Peter Whitmer home in the town of Fayette, Seneca County, on Tuesday, April 6, 1830, for the purpose of organizing a church.

In conformity with previous arrangements the Prophet Joseph, after calling the meeting to order and conducting a brief devotional service, told the members present that he had been commanded of the Lord to organize a church, which church should be called by His name, "The Church of Jesus Christ." After giving a summary of the different heavenly manifestations and the conferring of the Holy Priesthood, with the keys of Apostleship and authority to officiate in Christ's name, he called upon the members present to freely express themselves as to whether or not they were willing to accept himself and Oliver Cowdery as their spiritual teachers and be organized as a church. The proposition was unanimously accepted, whereupon Joseph laid his hands upon Oliver Cowdery and ordained him an elder in the Church of Jesus Christ, after which Oliver, in like manner, ordained Joseph Smith to the same office. It was explained that those who are called to positions of responsibility were sustained by vote, or common consent, of those over whom they preside, and should have the confidence, faith and prayers of the "body, or Church, of Christ."

CHURCH ORGANIZED

In order to comply with the laws of the State of New York, the church was organized with a membership of six persons. The six original members were as follows: Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Samuel H. Smith

and David Whitmer. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered to the members present, after which they were confirmed members of the church and had the Holy Ghost conferred upon them by Joseph Smith, Jr., and Oliver Cowdery, who previously had the Melchisedek Priesthood conferred upon them, and been ordained to the office of an elder in that priesthood.

The spirit of the Lord was manifest among them and there was joy and rejoicing. The spirit of missionary work seemed to take possession of the little group and each member felt it his duty to warn his neighbor. Some were ordained to different offices in the priesthood and the duties of these offices explained to them. It was also decided to meet in conference at the same place on June 1st, to hear reports from those who had been assigned to special missionary work, and to further organize for the dissemination of the gospel message.

In referring to this "American Church," the poet and historian Whitney, says: "Thus was founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Thus arose, as a system, what the world calls 'Mormonism,' universally regarded as the most remarkable religious movement of modern times, detested and denounced throughout Christendom as a dangerous and soul-destroying imposture, but revered and defended by its disciples as the wonderful work of the Almighty, the veritable 'marvelous work and a wonder' foretold by Isaiah and other ancient prophets and seers, which was to prepare the world, by preaching the restored gospel and the founding of Latter-day Zion, for Messiah's second coming and the advent of the Millenium."

A meeting was held at the Peter Whitmer home April 11th, at which time Oliver Cowdery preached the first public discourse of this new gospel dispensation. Six new members were added to the church this day by baptism and confirmation. On April 18th, a similar meeting was held at which seven new members were added to the fold. During the latter part of April, Joseph and Oliver returned to Joseph's home at Harmony. They were soon visited by Joseph Knight of Colesville, N. Y., to invite them to hold cottage meetings at his house. The invitation was readily accepted and Joseph and Oliver returned with him to Colesville, where they held meetings, as well as at other points in Broome County. Here they made many new friends and baptized a score

or more of new converts. In fact, it was at Colesville that the first branch of the church was organized.

JOSEPH SMITH ARRESTED

It was necessary for Joseph and Oliver to hasten to Fayette to be present, and take charge, of the first church conference which had been set for June 1st. About thirty members were present, besides quite a number of visitors and investigators. A number of the brethren spoke on the first principles of the restored gospel, and thirteen new members were added to the church. Joseph and Oliver returned to Colesville and Harmony and were surprised to learn that Satan had been exceedingly busy during their absence and had stirred up strong opposition. The enemy had organized and Joseph was soon served with a warrant on a trumped-up charge that he had made claims to receiving "new revelation direct from God." When the charge against him in Chenango County failed on the grounds of "no cause for complaint," he was immediately served with a warrant from Broome County, which ended in like manner. Even Joseph's father-in-law, Isaac Hale, had become prejudiced and sided with the rabble. It became necessary for Joseph and his wife to go to Fayette, N. Y., and make their home with the big-hearted Dutch farmer, Peter Whitmer.

When Joseph Smith was arrested in Broome County, his friends secured the services of Mr. Davidson and Mr. Reed, two local lawyers, both non-Mormons, to defend him. As an account of the trial never reached the court records, we are somewhat dependent on a public speech made by Mr. Reed thirteen years later, from which I shall quote very briefly—"The prosecutors employed the best counsel they could get, and ransacked the County of Chenango for witnesses that would swear hard enough to convict the prisoner; but they entirely failed. Yes, sir, let me say that not one blemish nor spot was found against his character, and he came from that trial, notwithstanding the mighty efforts that were made to convict him of crime by his vigilant persecutors, with his character unstained by even the appearance of guilt. The trial closed at 12.00 o'clock at night. The court pronounced the words 'Not guilty.' But alas! the devil, not satisfied with his defeat, stirred up a man not unlike himself, who was more fit to

dwelling among the fiends of hell than to belong to the human family, to go to Colesville and get another writ, and take him to Broome County for another trial. So in half an hour after he was discharged by the court, he was arrested again and on the way to Colesville for another trial. I was again called upon by his friends to defend him against his malignant persecutors, and clear him from the false charges they had preferred against him. As I had been up nearly the whole of two days and two nights I tried to beg off; and here let me say, Mr. Chairman, singular as it may seem, while Mr. Knight was pleading with me to go, a peculiar impression or thought struck my mind, that I should go and defend him, for he was the Lord's anointed. *** The next morning the court was organized. The prisoner was to be tried by three justices of the peace, that his departure out of the county might be sure. They employed the ablest lawyer in the county, and introduced twenty or thirty witnesses before dark, but proved nothing. They then sent out runners and ransacked the hills and vales, grog shops and ditches, and gathered together a company that looked as if they had come from hell and had been whipped by the soot boy thereof. These they brought forth to testify one after another, but nothing was proven against Joseph Smith. They got through with the examination of the witnesses about two o'clock in the morning, and the case was argued about two hours. *** Like the three Hebrews cast into the fiery furnace, he came out of that trial without the smell of smoke on his garments. *** The court arraigned the prisoner and said, 'Mr. Smith, we have had your case under consideration, examined the testimony and find nothing to condemn you, and therefore you are discharged.' This was not unlike the Apostle Paul's hearing before Felix, Festus and Agrippa, 'We find nothing in him worthy of bonds or death.' "

Mr. Reed was a man of Christian qualities, a member of the Presbyterian Church. He believed in justice and was anxious to see it meted out to his fellowmen, regardless of their religious affiliations. Whether for professional reasons or otherwise, Mr. Reed never joined the "Mormon" Church.

PARLEY P. PRATT ARRIVES ON SCENE

During the month of August, 1830, a young man twenty-three years of age, stepped off an Erie Canal boat at Newark, N. Y., who

was destined to become a pillar in the then infant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. This young man's name was Parley P. Pratt, born in Canaan, Columbia County, N. Y., moving while yet in his teens to Oswego, N. Y., and still later to Mentor, near Kirtland, Ohio. He was a disciple of Alexander Campbell, who organized the "Sect of the Disciples," later changing the name to the "Christian Church." Mr. Pratt had become an ardent Bible student, and placed rather a liberal interpretation on the scriptures. He accepted most of Mr. Campbell's teachings, but could not satisfy his mind as to where he got his authority to organize a church and officiate in the ordinances of Christ's Gospel. He reasoned that "Paul I know and Peter I know," but who is Alexander Campbell? Mr. Pratt made a close study of the Bible and felt an urge to acquaint others with the teachings of the Master. He talked the matter over with his wife and they decided to sell their home at Mentor and go to Canaan and devote all of his time to preaching. They arranged for fare over the Erie Canal, but, as they passed through Palmyra, Mr. Pratt was impressed that he should begin his labors as a preacher in this region, and, accordingly when they got to Newark, he got off the boat, bidding his wife goodbye, and she continued on her way to Canaan, N. Y.

Parley P. Pratt got off the boat early in the morning and walked ten miles into the country where he took breakfast with a Mr. Wells. He introduced himself as a preacher and proposed preaching in the neighborhood that evening. Mr. Wells took kindly to the suggestion and accompanied Mr. Pratt throughout the neighborhood to notify the farmers. While going the rounds, they called on an old Baptist deacon, who after hearing of their appointment for a meeting, began to tell them of a VERY, VERY STRANGE BOOK that he had but recently purchased. He said it was purported to have originally been written on plates of gold but was translated by a young man living near Palmyra, N. Y. He invited Mr. Pratt to call on him next day and he would let him read it. Mr. Pratt called and saw, for the first time, the "BOOK OF MORMON," which tells of the antiquities of the "New World," reaching back into the distant past. He became intensely interested in the book. After reading a dozen or more chapters, he set out to interview Joseph Smith. He walked to Palmyra and was directed to the Smith farm two miles south. On arriving at

the Smith home, he was informed that Joseph was in Harmony, Pa., but Hyrum took him in tow and they spent most of the night reading the book and discussing all the happenings leading up to its translation and publication.

Hyrum Smith accompanied Mr. Pratt to the Whitmer home in Seneca County, where they met with a hearty welcome by the Whitmer family and other members there. Next day Parley P. Pratt was baptized in Seneca Lake by Oliver Cowdery. That evening a meeting was held at the Whitmer home, at which time Parley P. Pratt was confirmed a member. He was also ordained to the office of an elder in the church. The following Sabbath a meeting was held at the home of a Mr. Borroughs, and Elder Pratt preached a powerful sermon to a house full of interested listeners. At the close of the meeting four men applied for baptism and were baptized the following day.

Parley P. Pratt became a very active worker in the new church at once, and, taking leave from the members at Fayette, he hastened to take the glad news to his wife and folks at Canaan. Filled with enthusiasm, he related his experience to his folks. They became much interested and he converted and baptized his younger brother, Orson Pratt, then 19 years old, who afterwards became a mighty and sturdy pillar in the new church. Orson became saturated with the spirit of missionary work and wanted to go to Palmyra with his brother, Parley, but was persuaded to remain with the family for a season. Joseph Smith had returned from Harmony, Pa., to his father's home, and extended a hearty welcome to Elder Pratt. A very warm friendship grew up between them. A general call had been sent out to the scattered members to meet in conference at the Peter Whitmer home in Seneca County on September 1st, and Elder Pratt accompanied Joseph and Hyrum to this conference. A goodly number of Saints, as they were now called, were present. As the church was still in its infancy, and as the members were taken from various denominations, they were not, as yet, thoroughly seasoned in the gospel plan, as it had but recently been restored to earth. At this conference, things pertaining to doctrines and church organization were explained and the members strengthened in their faith.

Opposition had become so aggressive that Joseph had to be secreted away from Chenango and Broome Counties, to escape the

violence of a mob numbering about 300 men, who had gathered, pledging themselves to rid the country of Joseph Smith, Jr., whom they looked upon as a disturbing element in their community. It has been the policy of the Latter-Day Saints from the beginning of the church to locate in communities. This enables them to live and help their neighbors to live, to be helpful and assist each other, to become strong as a unit through mutual interest in solving everyday problems, and working co-operatively. And at this conference held September 26, 1830, four men were called to journey westward to select a gathering place for the Latter-Day Saints. Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Peter Whitmer, Jr., and Ziba Peterson were selected for the work and were set apart as missionaries and instructed to journey leisurely and do missionary work enroute, preaching to the native Indians, as well as to white people. They began their westward journey on foot, stopping to preach to the Cattaraugus Indians near Buffalo, and presented them with copies of the Book of Mormon which contains a history of their forefathers. They now proceeded to Mentor, Elder Pratt's old home town, where they met Sidney Rigdon, Elder Pratt's former pastor, when he was associated with the Campbellite Church. After explaining the circumstances leading up to the discovery of new truths, they were granted the privilege of holding a meeting in Rev. Rigdon's church. A large congregation greeted them and many were favorably impressed, including Mr. Rigdon. In less than three weeks they baptized 127 souls, including many of the more prominent citizens. This number was soon increased to over 1,000 in and around Kirtland, Ohio. After ordaining a number of their brethren to the priesthood, including Sidney Rigdon, to carry on the work locally, these missionaries continued their journey to the western frontier in the State of Missouri.

SIDNEY RIGDON ARRIVES

A little later in the Fall of 1830, Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge of Kirtland, Ohio, journeyed to Fayette, N. Y., to meet the Prophet Joseph Smith personally. About this time also, Orson Pratt, brother of Parley P. Pratt, came from Canaan, N. Y., to see if he could be of service in assisting Joseph Smith. These three men afterwards became stalwart men in the early rise of the church. After a prayerful council with those holding the priest-

hood, it was decided that they should all migrate to Kirtland, Ohio, and make that the first gathering place for the persecuted Saints, which should be a resting place away from the intolerant turmoil, until a permanent, central place could be selected. A conference was called for January 2nd, 1831, at which time the church was strengthened, and the question of their migration to Ohio freely discussed. It was advised that the members sell their property as soon as possible. It was also advised that Joseph Smith and his wife, Emma, go with Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge, to effect a more perfect organization at Kirtland and prepare for those, who should follow from New York State. They arrived in Kirtland February 1, 1831, where Joseph was kindly received and entertained by the members of the church. He made his home temporarily with Newel K. Whitney. During the following May and June the Saints from New York began to arrive in Ohio and settled in and near Kirtland.

We have now followed the Joseph Smith family during its somewhat chequered career from the time they arrived in Palmyra in 1816, to their departure for Kirtland, Ohio, in 1831.

A few parting shots from local historians might not be out of place here. I quote briefly from the "History of Waterloo"—"Mormon Joe came to Fayette about 1830. He made his headquarters at the farm house of Peter Whitmer, three miles southwest of the village. *** It was there where Joe Smith disclosed the golden plates and their divinity, which, he claimed, he unearthed on a hill near Manchester, N. Y., and it was at the Whitmers' where he received and promulgated the 'revelation' for establishing the church and where he also effected its organization.

"For several weeks following his arrival, he was shut up in an upper chamber of the Whitmer house for hours at a time, translating the characters engraved on the plates which he called 'reformed Egyptian.' With two bright, clean stones in his hands—stones such as might have been picked up on any beach—he sat intently gazing upon them and, from time to time uttering in baritone sentences, which were written down by a companion named Oliver Cowdery. *** Smith called the two stones he used his 'divine optical instruments.' He said they had a spiritual reflection from the plates. *** Neighbors came in from time to time but were never allowed to see the golden plates. *** Converts

were taken one at a time, as each professed the faith, and were baptized in Thomas Creek, a small stream flowing nearby.”

From the “History of Seneca County—“Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, was at one time a resident of Fayette. Hon. D. S. Kendig, who furnished the writer the information, remembers him well. He worked as a day laborer for Colonel Jacob Chamberlain, and others, when not engaged with his mineral rods digging for gold in various places. *** On one occasion he happened to strike the ‘Golden Bible,’ as he averred, near Palmyra, Wayne County. This Bible he brought to the house of an honest old Dutch farmer, named Whitmer, living in Fayette, and there translated it, and by the aid of one Oliver Cowdery, wrote the Mormon Bible, or a portion of it, which was afterwards printed. This was about the year 1829 or 1830. In 1831 he left Fayette, and numerous converts went with him, among them were the Whitmers, the Jolley family and others. The people hereabouts were not sorry to be rid of them.”

From the “History of Ontario County” by Charles F. Millikin—
“Mormonism, which has become one of the greatest national evils, originated in the town of Manchester, and in turn has given to Manchester a national renown. Joseph Smith, the first Mormon prophet and founder of Mormonism, was born in Sharon, Vt. *** In 1818 they squatted on a piece of land on Stafford Road, in the northwestern corner of Manchester.

“Their neighbors regarded them as a shiftless and untrustworthy family. They were visionary and superstitious and were always digging for hidden treasure. *** Their favorite place for digging came to be on ‘Mormon Hill,’ often called ‘Gold Bible Hill.’ **** Joe possessed even less than ordinary intellect, and among the boys, was always the butt of their ridicule and jokes, which have become local history. *** He was not only lazy and indolent, but also intemperate, and his word was not to be depended upon, and we are truly glad to dispense with their society.”

From “Rochester Daily Advertiser” dated April 2, 1830—

“BLASPHEMY—‘BOOK OF MORMON’

Alias the GOLDEN BIBLE

“The Book of Mormon has been placed in our hands. A viler imposition was never practiced. It is an evidence of fraud, blas-

phemy and credulity, shocking to Christian and moralist. The 'author and proprietor' is Joseph Smith, Jr., a fellow who, by some hokus pokus, acquired such influence over a wealthy farmer of Wayne County, that the latter mortgaged his home for \$3,000.00 which he paid for printing and binding 5,000 copies of the blasphemous work. The volume consists of about 600 pages, and is divided into books of Nephi, of Jacob, of Mosiah, of Alma, of Mormon, of Ether and Helaman.—Copyright secured. The style of the work may be conjectured from the 'preface' and 'testimonials' which are subjoined."

From the "History of Broome County"—"It is interesting to note that this town (Colesville) can truthfully boast (?) of being the field where the redoubtable Joe Smith, leader and promulgator of the Mormon faith in its infancy, began his ministrations to a benighted world. *** Joe Smith came from Vermont when a boy and settled near Palmyra, N. Y. After he came here later as a saintly prophet, his particular field of labor was a little east of Ninevah, near where Joseph Knight had a carding mill, about two miles above Centre Village. Knight was among the early converts to the new religion and went away with the sanctified."

From the "Salem Gazette," dated Marietta, Ohio, November 16, 1831—"You are sensible how celebrated has become Western New York and the adjacent country of Ohio, for their sects, their narratives, their fanaticism, religion, political and anti-Masonic. Their conceits are wild to the very farthest bounds of imagination, wild in invention and singularly successful in carrying into effect their solemn fooleries. You have heard of the Mormonites. The newspapers have given detailed accounts of these fanatics, but perhaps their origin is so well known. Mormonism is the fruit of religious excitement in this quarter, combined with roguery, ingenuity and ignorance, frequently operating successfully on those who ought to know better. The inventors of this species of fanaticism, are very simple personages, and were unknown until thus brought into notice. They are old and young Joe Smith, one Harris, a farmer, all of New York, and one Rigdon, a sort of preacher from Ohio, with several other infatuated, cunning hypocrites. Old Joe was once a peddler, and possessed all that cunning shrewdness and small intrigue characteristic of that description of persons."

From "Broome County Courier," December 29, 1831—"These excavations are still to be seen in many places. The diggers continued their labors until at length one of the party, tired of a laborious and unsuccessful search, spoke of a person in Ohio, near Painesville, on Lake Erie, who had a wonderful facility in finding the spot where money was to be found. 'Can we get that man here?' asked the infatuated Smiths. 'I guess as how we can by going after him, and if I had a little change for expenses, I would go myself,' The desired change was soon forthcoming and the famous money dreamer, Rigdon of Ohio, made his appearance. He had been a preacher of various religions, and a teacher of almost all kinds of morals. He was experienced in all sorts of camp meetings, anxious meetings and revivals, or four day meetings. He knew every turn of the human mind, relative to these matters. He had considerable talent and great plausibility. He partly united with the money diggers in making an excavation in what has since been called the 'Gold Bible Hill.' In such times and under such circumstances was born the Mormon religion.

"In this age of wonders, the cunning ex-preacher, Sidney Rigdon, from Ohio suggested to the money diggers to turn their digging concern into a religious plot. It was, therefore, given out that a vision had appeared to Joe Smith, that there was deposited in the hill I have mentioned, an iron chest containing Golden Plates on which was engraved the 'Book of Mormon.' "

It will be observed by these brief quotations from a rather lengthy article that appeared in the "Broome County Courier" in 1831, that the original writers in bringing Sidney Rigdon into the Mormon movement, did not connect him with the Solomon Spaulding story, but was instrumental in changing the "treasure seeking" and "gold digging" scheme into a "religious plot," which was more in his line. The Spaulding story was a later thought. But in order that the reader may know that Sidney Rigdon had absolutely nothing to do with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and that he did not even see a copy of the book for more than six months after it came off the press, I quote from a statement during a conversation with his son—"My son, I can swear before high heaven that what I have told you about the origin of that book is true. Your mother and sister, Mrs. Athalia Robinson, were present when that book was handed to me in Mentor, Ohio,

and all I ever knew about the origin was what Parley P. Pratt, Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith and the witnesses, who claim they saw the plates have told me, and, in all my intimacy with Joseph Smith, he never told me but one story, and that was that he found it engraved upon gold plates in a hill near Palmyra, New York, and that an angel had appeared to him and directed him where to find it. I have never, to you nor anyone else, told but the one story, and that I now repeat to you: Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God, and the world will find it out some day."

I shall here quote a few of the many varying opinions of early non-Mormon writers. From the "Christian Reflector"—"He lived for fourteen years amid vindictive enemies who never missed an opportunity to vilify, to harass, and to destroy him; and he died at last an untimely and miserable death involving in his fate a brother, to whom he was tenderly attached. If anything can tend to encourage the supposition that Joseph was a sincere enthusiast, maddened with religious frenzies, as many have been before and will be after him—and that he had a strong and invincible faith in his own high pretensions and divine mission, it is the probability that, unless supported by such strong feelings, he would have renounced the unprofitable and ungrateful task, and sought refuge from persecution and misery in private life and honorable industry. But whether knave or lunatic, whether a liar or a true man, it cannot be denied that he was one of the most extraordinary persons of his time, a man of rude genius, who accomplished a much greater work than he knew, and whose name, whatever he may have been whilst living, will take its place among the notabilities of the world. *** Joseph Smith murdered was a greater prophet than Joseph Smith alive."

From the "New York Herald," 1842—"Joseph Smith, the president of the church, prophet, seer and revelator, is thirty-six years of age, six feet high in his pumps, weighing two hundred twelve pounds. He is a man of the highest talent and great independence of character, firm in his integrity, and devoted to his religion. *** As a public speaker he is bold, powerful and convincing; as a leader, wise and prudent, yet fearless; as a military commander, brave and determined; as a citizen, worthy, affable, and kind, bland in his manners, and noble in bearing."

From the "Salem Advertiser," Massachusetts, 1843. A

reporter visits Nauvoo, Ill., and writes—"I passed on into the more active parts of the city, looking into every street and lane to observe all that was passing. I found all the people engaged in some useful employment. The place was alive with business—much more so than any place I had visited since the hard times commenced. I sought in vain for anything that bore the marks of immorality, but was both astonished and highly pleased with my ill success. I could see no loungers about the streets nor any drunkards about the taverns. I did not meet with those distorted features of the ruffians, or with the ill-bred and impudent. I heard not an oath in the place, I saw not a gloomy countenance. All were cheerful, polite and industrious."

Again—"Various are the opinions of men concerning this singular person, (Joseph Smith). But whatever may be the views of any in reference to his principles, objects, or moral character, all agree that he was one of the most remarkable men of the age."

From the "Edinburgh Review," England—"These converts were mostly from the Eastern states, and seem to have been, in habits and character, superior to the common run of squatters. Colonel Kane, who visited them at a later period, contrasts them favorably as 'persons of refined and cleanly habits and decent language,' with other border inhabitants of Missouri—the vile scum which our society, like the great ocean, washes upon its shores."

On January 19, 1829, Josiah Quincy was appointed president of Harvard University by the Board of Overseers, and in 1845-49, was mayor of Boston, Mass. I quote briefly from his work, "Figures of the Past"—"It is by no means impossible that some future text book, for the use of generations yet unborn, will contain a question something like this: What historical American of the 19th century has exerted the most powerful influence upon the destinies of his countrymen? It is by no means impossible that the answer to that interrogatory may be thus written—Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet. And the reply, absurd as it doubtless seems to most men now living, may be an obvious commonplace to their descendants. History deals in surprises and paradoxes quite as startling as this. A man who had established a religion in this age of free debate, who was, and is today, accepted by hundreds and thousands as a direct emissary from the Most High, such a human being is not to be disposed of by pelting his

memory by unsavory epithets. Fanatic, imposter, charlatan he may have been; but these hard names furnish no solution to the problem he presents to us. Fanatics and imposters are living and dying every day, and their memory is buried with them; but the wonderful influence this founder of religion exerted, and still exerts, throws him in relief before us, not as a rogue to be criminated, but as a phenomenon to be explained."

Again from the same author—"Born in the lowest ranks of poverty, without book learning, and with the homeliest of all human names, he had made of himself, at the age of thirty-eight, a power upon the earth. Of the multitudinous family of Smith, none had so won human hearts and shaped human lives as this Joseph. His influence, whether for good or evil, is potent today and the end is not yet. If the reader does not know what to make of Joseph Smith, I cannot help him out of the difficulty. I myself stand helpless before the puzzle."

From "History of Susquehanna County"—"Joe Smith, the Mormon prophet—'A madman, or a fool, hath ever set the world agog.' It is a fact, of which we are not particularly proud, that Susquehanna County harbored such a madman as Joe Smith at the period during which he was engaged in the complication, or rather the translation, of the Book of Mormon."

Joseph Smith said: "I am a rough stone. The sound of the hammer and chisel were never heard on me until the Lord took me in hand. I desire the learning and wisdom of heaven alone."

And thus I might continue quotations from scores of writers, but were I to continue, this series of articles would be too lengthy. I have selected a few gathered from widely scattered sources. During Joseph Smith's fourteen years ministry he had been arrested, tried and acquitted two score times. He was accused of practically every crime on the calendar, including arson, murder and treason. Joseph and some of his brethren were courtmartialed and sentenced to be shot at eight o'clock the following morning, but General Doniphan, whose duty it was to carry the order into effect, protested in the name of humanity and refused to carry out the sentence. Joseph Smith was imprisoned, tarred and feathered, mobbed and suffered every ignominy that could be heaped against him. Some were beginning to think he possessed a charmed life,

but Joseph disabused their minds as follows: "Some have thought that 'Brother Joseph' could not die, but this is a mistake. It is true that there have been times when I have had the promise of my life to accomplish such and such things, but, having now accomplished those things, I have not at present any lease on my life, I am as liable to die as other men."

Again—"I prophesied that the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction, and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains, many would apostatize, others would be put to death by our persecutors, or lose their lives in consequence of exposure or disease; and some of you will live to go and assist in making settlements and build cities, and see the Saints become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains, but I shall not live to see it fulfilled."

On another occasion he said: "I feel it to be my duty and privilege to obtain what influence and power I can lawfully in the United States, for the protection of injured innocence, and, if I lose my life in a good cause, I am willing to be sacrificed on the altar of virtue, righteousness and truth, in maintaining the laws and constitution of the United States, if need be for the general good of mankind."

To those who are familiar with the New Testament, the treatment meted out to Joseph Smith and the Latter-Day Saints, will have a familiar ring. It was the first citizens of Jerusalem, the devout Pharisees and Sadduces who "accused Jesus of Nazareth of many things." They called him a "madman, a man that hath a devil, a wine-bibber, a friend of Publicans and sinners, a desecrator of the Sabbath, a blasphemer, a stirrer-up of sedition, etc." The super-devout Pharisees and other devout people said, "If we let this man go, the whole world will believe on him." So they hustled him before the council (Sanhedrin) then before Annas, then before Caiaphas, then before Pilate, then before Herod Antipas, then back to Pilate. His accusers "suborned witnesses of the baser sort, to swear falsely against him." The last charge brought against Jesus was treason against the Roman government. He was crucified by Roman soldiers.

Joseph Smith was accused of being "a lounge, an idler, a fraud, a money digger, a smoke-house and hen-house purloiner, a

sheep thief, a teacher of false religion, a deceiver, a drunkard, a false prophet, a stirrer-up of sedition, treason, etc." The last charge against him was treason, and while incarcerated in jail at Carthage, Ill., under the pledged protection of Governor Ford, he and his brother Hyrum, were shot to death by a mob with blackened faces, assisted by members of the state militia. The last word that went out was, "If the law can't get him, powder and ball can." He was martyred June 27, 1844.

The following is a letter written by Thomas Ford, governor of the State of Illinois, to the editor of the "Warsaw Signal"—"Carthage, June 24, 1844. Dear Sir: Some misunderstanding between the constable and the persons accused in Nauvoo, as to the time of departure, caused the constable to return yesterday without the prisoners. In the evening four of the prisoners came in and surrendered themselves. The request was made for another escort for Smith, and the others accused, for tomorrow, which, upon due consideration was refused.

LOOKS LIKE A FRAME-UP

"Early this morning I despatched Captain Dunn with his troop, to demand the artillery and public arms in Nauvoo. On the prairie, four miles on the way to Nauvoo, Captain Dunn met Smith and the others coming out to Carthage. The order for arms was endorsed by Smith, who returned to Nauvoo to deliver the arms as requested. I am assured that the arms and artillery will be delivered, and that all persons required will return with Captain Dunn to this place.

I am, most respectfully, &

Thomas Ford."

A few hours later: "To the editor of the "Warsaw Signal," N. B.—A large portion of the militia will be discharged this evening. I have the most satisfactory information that the Nauvoo Legion has been discharged, and that the Mormons from the country, assembled under arms in the city, have returned to their homes.

Thomas Ford."

Warsaw was the headquarters for the anti-Mormon agitation. And now that the governor had kept them posted as to the developments in Nauvoo, tipping it off to them that the Mormon

militia had been mustered out and disarmed, thus rendering them harmless, and that the people in the rurals, who had taken refuge in the city when trouble threatened, had returned to their homes, and Joseph and his companions had surrendered and were incarcerated in jail at Carthage, the stage was all set for the slaughter. While on the way to Carthage, Joseph Smith remarked, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am as cool as a summer's morning. I have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward all men. If they take my life, I shall die an innocent man, and my blood shall cry from the ground for vengeance, and it shall yet be said of me 'He was murdered in cold blood!'" "

On June 27, 1844, mustered out militiamen of Warsaw and vicinity, joined by citizens from the surrounding country, formed a mob of between two and three hundred men, and marched toward Carthage, Hancock County, Ill. The mob halted in the woods about a mile from Carthage, where they built a fire to make some charcoal with which to blacken their faces as a disguise, after which they began their trek to the jail. As they approached the jail, according to previous understanding, the small militia guard made a fake resistance, then joined with the mob and stormed the jail. Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, were shot to death, receiving four balls each. John Taylor, one of their companions, was also shot four times, but survived to later become the third president of the church.

I quote from a paper published at Springfield, Ill.—"We have good reason to believe that Governor Ford is in possession of all the facts in relation to the murder of the Smiths. He knows the names of the individuals concerned, to a great extent, and especially does he know the name of the leader. As that leader was a captain in the loco foco party, of course he was not to be arrested before the election. An immediate arrest would be a premature execution of his duty. It might have diverted votes from his party candidates—whereas the scheme in operation was well designed to secure the votes of the anti-Mormons, as well as those of the Mormons.

"We understand that the documents in the Governor's hands state these circumstances: that when it was learned at Warsaw that Joe and Hyrum Smith were in prison at Carthage, there was a draft among the anti-Mormon troops at Warsaw of every tenth

man; that - - was appointed captain; that they disguised themselves with charcoal and proceeded to the neighborhood of Carthage; that an arrangement was made by which they should ostensibly attack the guard at the jail, fire over their heads, seize them and then execute their purpose of killing the Smiths. The plan was fully carried out. The governor at this time, however, is apparently too much engaged in politics to give attention to this matter, and it will probably not be disturbed again until the near approach of another election."

The St. Louis Republican reports the scene by an eye witness — "The murder was committed about six o'clock in the evening, by an armed mob of about 200 men painted black and yellow, who surrounded the jail, forced it, and poured a shower of bullets into the room where the men were confined. Each of the victims received four balls in the body, and John Taylor, editor of the 'Nauvoo Neighbor,' was shot in four places, but not fatally injured. *** Great excitement prevailed in the county of Hancock, and had extended to many of the surrounding counties. A large number of the militia of several counties were under arms at Carthage, the headquarters of the commanding General Deming, and many other troops were under arms at Warsaw and at other places in the neighborhood. The governor was at headquarters in person for the purpose of seeing that the laws of the land were executed, and had pledged his own faith and the faith of the State of Illinois that the Smiths, and the other persons concerned with them, should be protected from personal violence, if they would surrender themselves to be dealt with according to law. *** Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, were both arrested on the charge of treason against the State of Illinois. The affidavits upon which the writs were issued were made by Henry Norton and Augustine Spencer. *** On Wednesday forenoon the governor, in company with one of his friends, visited the prisoners at the jail, and again assured them that they should be protected from violence, and told them that if the troops marched the next day to Nauvoo, as His Excellency expected, they should be taken along, in order to insure their personal safety. *** On Thursday, the 27th of June, a council of the military officers was called by the governor, and it was decided to march to Nauvoo, with all the troops except one company which would be selected by the governor, whose fidelity

could be depended on to guard the prisoners. On Thursday morning another consultation of officers took place, and the former order for marching the whole army to Nauvoo was countermanded. One company was ordered to accompany the governor to Nauvoo. The Carthage Greys, who had but two days before been under arrest for insulting the commanding general, and who had been more hostile to the prisoners than any other company, were selected to guard the prisoners *** A guard of only eight men were stationed at the jail, while the rest of the Greys were in camp a half mile away, and while His Excellency was haranguing the peaceable citizens of Nauvoo, and asking them to give up all their arms, the assassins were murdering the prisoners in jail, whom the governor had pledged himself, and the faith of the state, to protect."

GOVERNOR FORD MAKES ALIBI

Conscience smitten because of his weak-kneed and questionable attempt in carrying out his pledge to protect the prisoners, Governor Ford issues the following statement—"I desire to make a brief but true statement of the disgraceful affair at Carthage, in regard to the Smiths, so far as circumstances have come to my knowledge. The Smiths, Joseph and Hyrum, have been assassinated in gaol, by whom it is not known, but will be ascertained. I pledged myself for their safety; and upon the assurance of that pledge, they surrendered as prisoners. The Mormons surrendered the public arms in their possession, and the Nauvoo Legion submitted to the command of Captain Singleton, of Brown County, deputed for that purpose by me. All these things were required to satisfy the old citizens of Hancock that the Mormons were peaceably disposed, and to allay jealousy and excitement to their minds. It appears, however, that the compliance by the Mormons with every requisition made upon them, failed of that purpose. The pledge of security of the Smiths was not given upon my individual responsibility. Before I gave it, I obtained a pledge of honor by a unanimous vote from the officers and men under my command, to sustain me in performing it. If the assassination was committed by any portion of these men, they have added treachery to murder, and have done all they could to disgrace the state and sully the public honor."

Governor Ford, fearing that the disarmed Mormons would

secure arms elsewhere, and rise en masse to revenge the death of the Smiths, issued the following to the militia: "Headquarters, Quincy, June 29, 1844. It is ordered that the commandants of the regiments in the counties of Adams, Marquette, Pike, Brown, Schuyler, Morgan, Scott, Cass, Fulton and M'Donough, and regiments composing General Stapp's brigade, will call their respective regiments and battalions together immediately upon the receipt of this order, and proceed by voluntary enlistment to enroll as many men as can be armed in their respective regiments. They will make arrangements for a twelve days campaign, and will provide themselves with arms, ammunition and provisions, accordingly, and hold themselves in readiness immediately to march upon receipt of further orders. The independent companies of riflemen, infantry, cavalry and artillery, in the above named counties, and in the county of Sangamon, will hold themselves in readiness in like manner."

Thomas Ford

Governor and Commander-in-chief

It is needless to state that the death of Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, was a great shock to the Mormon people. When the wagons conveying the bodies of the martyred brothers neared the city, they were met by a large concourse of citizens of Nauvoo, who formed in a procession. As the procession reached the Mansion House, the assembly was addressed by W. W. Phelps, a former resident of Canandaigua, N. Y., and other leading men, who counseled the people to remain peaceful and refrain from seeking vengeance. I quote from the "Times and Seasons"—"And that vast assemblage, consisting of twelve thousand people, with one united voice, resolved to trust to the law for justice for such a high-handed assassination, and if that failed, to call upon God to avenge them of their wrongs. Oh, widows and orphans! Oh! Americans, weep! The glory of freedom has departed."

And thus did Joseph Smith, who was instrumental in launching what his enemies was pleased to call "our greatest national evil," meet his death courageously at the hands of a fiendish mob with blackened faces, and it is needless to say that his murderers were never brought to justice. His persecutors, vilifiers and his murderers have long since died and are forgotten, while the work Joseph Smith was instrumental in establishing, and directing for fourteen years, has become a national asset instead of a "menace,"

rapidly increasing in numbers, vitality, strength and power for good. It is like a beacon light, or a city set upon a hill that can be seen afar off. Because of its outstanding activities, it is attracting national and international attention. It is no longer spoken of as an unclean thing, but is recognized by clergy, educators and statesmen as a power for good, but I shall let others tell the story.

MORMONS ACTIVE IN SCOUT WORK

The Sixth National Training Conference of Scout Executives was held at French Lick, Ind., March 11 to 18, 1936. Heber J. Grant, president of the "Mormon" Church, received a letter of invitation from Dr. James E. West, chief executive and editor of "Boys Life," which reads in part as follows: "As we review the history of the Boy Scout movement, we find that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints was the first to give its official endorsement to Scouting. As we review the records of our local councils of the various church groups, we find that the Mormon group leads all others in the high percentage of its boys and young men who have received Scout training. It is, therefore, most fitting and proper that the Mormon Church be represented in our convocation on Scouting in the churches, and I am writing you on behalf of the conference committee, to extend a cordial invitation to you as president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, to speak in behalf of the Mormon Church and bring to our group, your appraisal of the value of Scouting in the magnificent program you have worked out for your boys and your young men.

"We would be pleased to have you indicate very clearly the close correlation between the program of your Scout Troops and Explorer Scouts, formerly Vanguarders, with the program of the Aaronic Priesthood. You have gone further than any other church group in relating Scouting to the entire program of your church in its service to boys. We would like our group to have a clear picture of how completely this has worked out to our mutual satisfaction.

"While you are indicating the church Scout executive relationship, we hope that you will also emphasize the great fundamental principles that undergird our national life and the spiritual motivation which is essential to good citizenship."

In introducing President Grant on this occasion, Dr. West spoke as follows: "Our first speaker this morning is President Heber J. Grant, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. *** He looks to be a man of youth and vigor, but it may amaze many of you to know, that he is actually nearing his eightieth milestone. *** I am sure it is in the heart of every man here to express gratitude to President Grant, indeed, to all of his associates, for the splendid cooperation that has been given almost from the very start of Scouting in America. Yes, I should like to go further. He has been so helpful and encouraging in the evidence of friendship and brotherhood that it has been a source of great joy and pleasure to work with him."

This series of abbreviated articles will not admit of giving excerpts from President Grant's splendid talk, but I shall insert certain quotations from a patriotic platform adopted by the Mormon Church at a general conference of the church one hundred two years ago: "We believe that governments were instituted by God for the benefit of man; and that He holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the good and safety of society.

"We believe that no government can exist in peace, except as such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual, the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property and protection of life.

"We do not believe it just to mingle religious influence with civil government, whereby one religious society is fostered and another proscribed in its religious privileges, and the individual rights of its members, as citizens denied."

CONSTITUTION INSPIRED

Again quoting from the teachings of Joseph Smith—"The constitution of the United States is a glorious standard. It is founded in the wisdom of God. It is a heavenly banner. It is to all those, who are privileged with the sweets of liberty, like the cooling shades and refreshing waters of a great rock in a weary and thirsty land. It is like a great tree under whose branches men from every clime can come and be shielded from the burning rays of the sun."

Also from the "Articles of Faith" of the Mormon Church—

“We claim the privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of our own consciences, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where or what they may.”

“We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers and magistrates, in obeying, honoring and sustaining the law.”

“We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men. Indeed, we may say, we follow the admonition of Paul. We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely or of good report, we seek after these things.”

In fact, the Latter Day Saints believe in, and quite consistently practice, all that is good for man, and abstain from all that is injurious to man. The Mormon Church has provided a plan that gives our young people a balanced menu for the uniform development of the physical, mental, moral and spiritual. The writer of these articles has lived among non-Mormons largely for the past thirty-five years and has frequently observed, among other churches, the tendency to stuff, or cram religion into the youth of the church. If persisted in, this policy will result in religion souring on their stomachs. And if not properly diluted or varied with wholesome recreation and amusement, this will give them spiritual indigestion.

But what of the future? Gamaliel, the great Jewish Rabbi and member of the Sanhedrin, gave the chief Jews who opposed Jesus so tenaciously, some wholesome advice which is worth passing on to this day: “If this work be of man, it will come to naught: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.” Acts 5:38, 39.

A TREE SHOULD BE JUDGED BY ITS FRUITS

It is a serious thing to fight against God. If this thing commonly called Mormonism be of man, it will come to naught. But it is a fact that during the one hundred eight years of its existence, it has hurdled every obstacle that church after church, state after state, and even the national government could throw in its path to check the progress of this supposed “national evil,” and it has shown no signs of disintegration; but to the contrary has continued to grow with leaps and bounds, gathering momentum, developing

vitality and functioning stronger than ever before. Could a church, or any other organization, founded upon fraud, deception or a lie, continue to gather strength for more than a hundred years without being detected, or at least showing signs of decay? Has the so-called Mormon Church been guided all this time by his Satanic Majesty, the Devil, who was a "liar and a murderer from the beginning?" John 8:44.

Or can it be just possible that Joseph Smith was the humble instrument in the hands of God, who uses the "weak and foolish things of the earth to confound the mighty and wise," to usher in another gospel dispensation even, "the dispensation of the fullness of times" (Eph. 1:10) during which there will be "a restitution of all things spoken of by all the holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21)?

Isaiah speaks of a time when men would "draw near unto me with their mouths and with their lips do honor me while their hearts are far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men: therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." Isa. 29:13, 14. Have we not reached that status? Has not the world been without revelation from God for centuries, during which time we have been taught by man's wisdom? Has not this scientific age practically crowded Christianity off the stage? Joseph Smith boldly says, "I have seen a vision, I know that God knows it, and who am I that I can withstand God?"

While the Apostle John was banished as a prisoner on the little isle of Patmos, in the Mediterranean Sea, nearly a hundred years A. D., he saw in vision a sort of panoramic picture of what would take place in the latter days, and among other things he saw was an angel bringing a gospel message to the earth. Here I quote from the Bible—"And I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." (Rev. 14:6). Note that it says THE everlasting gospel, not ONE of them. There can be but one everlasting gospel, and the angel should come at a time when THE GOSPEL in its fullness would not be on the earth. The next verse reads: "Saying

with a loud voice, fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of God's judgment has come: and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea and the fountains of water." You will note that the angel was to come at a time when mankind no longer feared God and were worshipping something other than the God which "made heaven and earth, etc."

Joseph Smith tells us, in a plain, simple manner, that an angel introducing himself as Moroni, who had once dwelt on this, the American continent, appeared to him in an upper room, his bedroom, and told him that there was a sacred record deposited in a hill not far from his father's farm, containing the "everlasting gospel" as taught by the resurrected Christ, to the people on this continent, and promised him that if he would prepare himself, he would be instrumental in bringing it forth to the inhabitants of the earth, and that his name would be "both good and evil spoken of among all people." Four years later, the record, (gold plates) with the Urim and Thummim, or "interpreters," were entrusted unto him for translation. The Book of Mormon was published in Palmyra during the winter of 1829-30. It has since been translated and published in eighteen languages, and translated into six other languages, but not yet printed.

The people of Missouri and Illinois would have spared Joseph Smith's life, if he had denied new revelation from God, and the Latter-Day Saints would have been spared mob violence, and in many cases death, if they would but repudiate "Joe Smith and his pretended revelations." But Joseph Smith was not a "hireling" prophet. When the wolves gathered and viciously showed their teeth, he did not desert the flock and flee like the hireling, but laid down his life, while yet a young man, in defense of the flock.

Jesus gives us a formula whereby we may recognize His duly appointed prophets. Again I quote from the Bible—"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing. *** Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A GOOD TREE CANNOT BRING FORTH EVIL FRUIT, NEITHER CAN AN EVIL TREE BRING FORTH GOOD FRUIT. *** Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:15-20).

If we are living in the latter days, when there is to be a

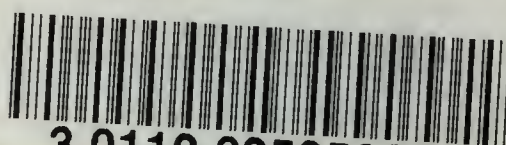
“restitution” of the gospel and all things “be gathered together in one, even in Christ,” and, if Joseph Smith was the “weak thing of the earth,” to usher it in, and, if the gospel tree planted by Joseph Smith, under the direction of heavenly messengers, has weathered the storms of unparalleled persecution for more than a hundred years and is still bringing forth wholesome, delicious fruit, even more abundantly year by year, then it has ever been nurtured by revelation from the Master, and all the powers of hell cannot prevail against it. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is built firmly upon the ‘rock of revelation,’ and will endure all kinds of weather. (Matt. 16:15-18).

Note—The writer of these articles has necessarily had to be brief to cover so much ground. He has gathered his data purposely from widely scattered sources, some avowed bitter enemies, others inclined to be impartial, while others inclined to be friendly. The majority of the quotations are from non-Mormon sources.



Palmyra as it is today, showing the north side of one of the business blocks on Main Street, looking west. The white business block with the white awning in the distance is where the Book of Mormon was printed.

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